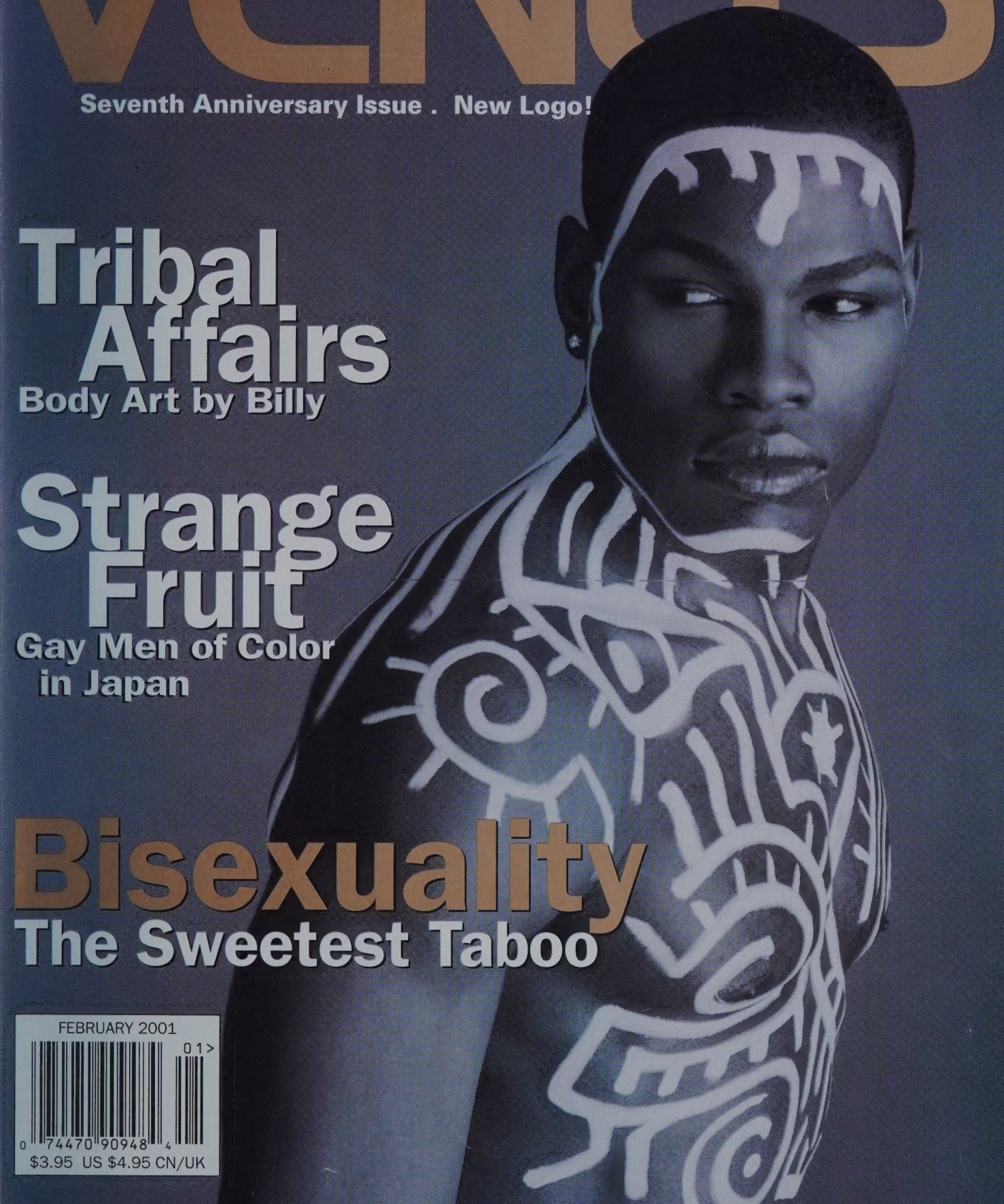
VENUS

Seventh Anniversary Issue . New Logo!



Tribal Affairs
Body Art by Billy

Strange Fruit
Gay Men of Color in Japan

Bisexuality
The Sweetest Taboo

FEBRUARY 2001
01>
0 74470 90948 4
$3.95 US $4.95 CN/UK

Powerful Therapy That Fits the Way You Live

LOWER VIRUS LEVELS—LONGER

SUSTIVA is effective long-term in combination treatment of HIV-1 infection. In clinical studies, combination therapies containing SUSTIVA were proven superior to an indinavir or a nelfinavir containing regimen in lowering the virus to levels that were undetectable.[1] In one study, SUSTIVA in combination with two NRTIs kept it at those levels for more than two years.[2]

TAKE IT JUST ONCE A DAY

SUSTIVA fits the way you live because you take it just once a day. Bedtime dosing is recommended during the first few weeks to improve tolerability of nervous system symptoms. It can be taken with or without meals, however high-fat meals should be avoided. There's no need to drink lots of liquid.

GENERALLY TOLERABLE SIDE EFFECTS

SUSTIVA is generally well tolerated, with no long-term toxicities observed.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting SUSTIVA. They tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. If you have these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately to discuss your therapy. There have been a few reports of suicide, but SUSTIVA has not been established as the cause. Mild to moderate rash is a common side effect of SUSTIVA. Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in animals given SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA should not be taken by patients who are also taking any of the following: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives as there is the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects.* See Patient Information about SUSTIVA on the following pages.

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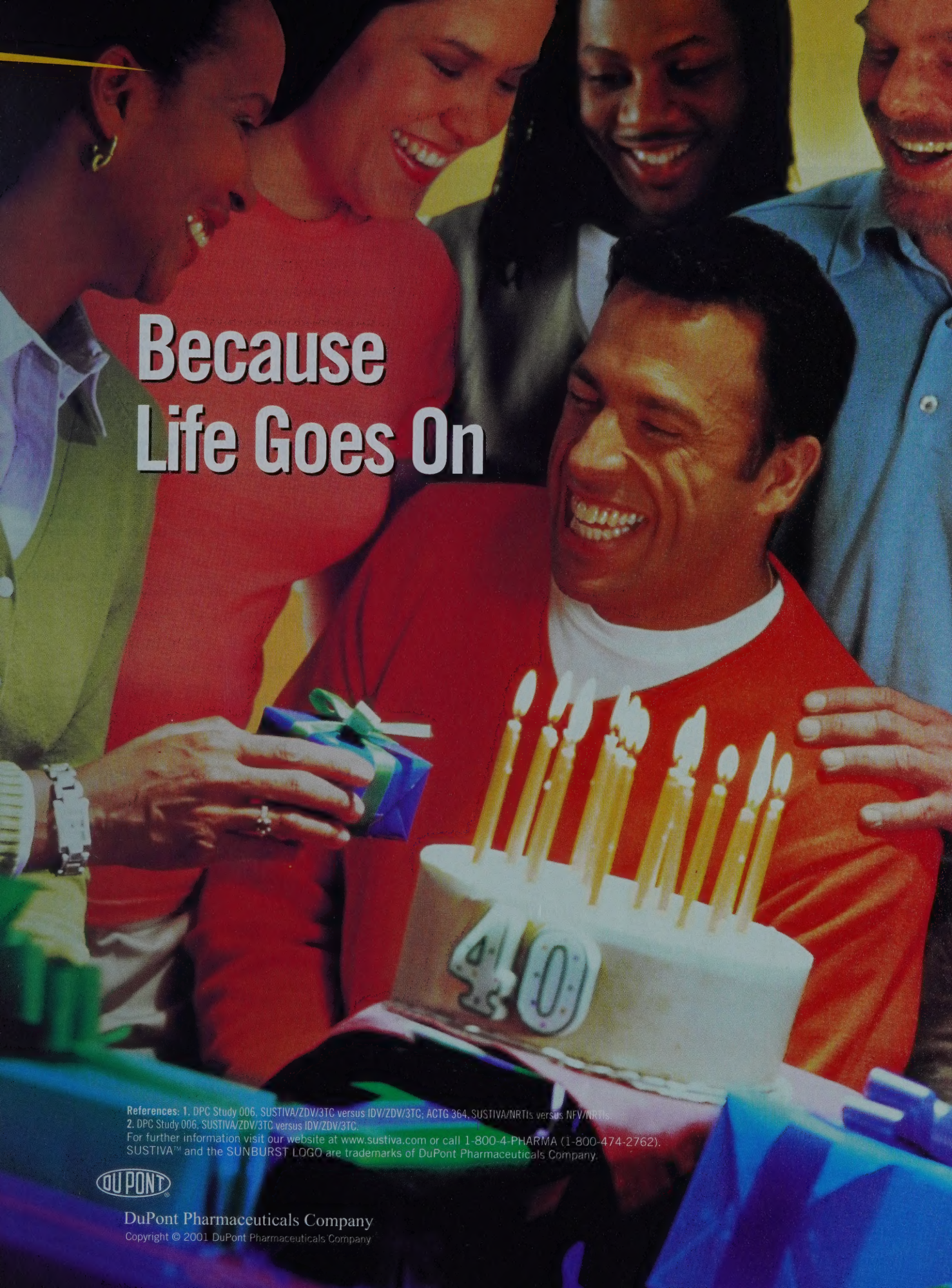
Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz



References: 1. DPC Study 006, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC; ACTG 364, SUSTIVA/NRTIs versus NFV/NRTIs.
2. DPC Study 006, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC.

For further information visit our website at www.sustiva.com or call 1-800-4-PHARMA (1-800-474-2762).

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DUPONT

DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company

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Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™
(efavirenz)
capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA* (sus-TEE-vah) for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?
SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?
SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?
SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?
- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk, or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?
Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?
Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?
Talk to your doctor right away if you:
- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had Hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?
A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few patients have actually committed suicide. These problems tend to occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness. You should contact your doctor immediately if you think you are having these symptoms, so your doctor can decide whether you should continue to take SUSTIVA.

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have severe depression, strange thoughts or angry behavior. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?
Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:
- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA**:
- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA**:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?
Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

* SUSTIVA™ is a trademark of DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company.
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DUPONT

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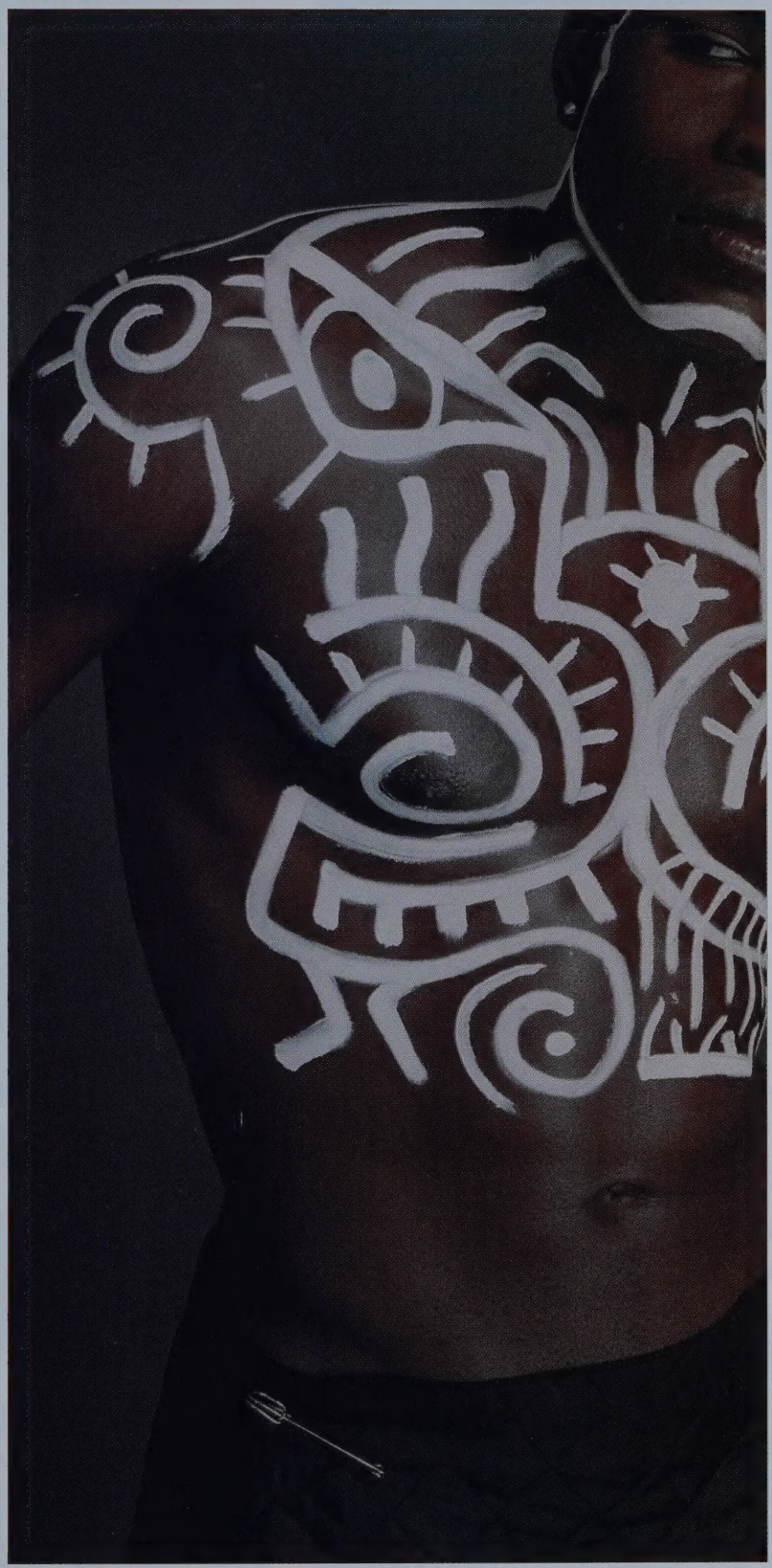
contents

features

30 Bi The Way
It is not a fleeting trend. Some people prefer to identify as bisexual. And this is enough to make them question the alienation they feel from straights and--most vehemently--gays.

39 Strange Fruit
In Tokyo, it takes more than a smile to know if the object of your affection has sugar in his shoes. Eugenio A. Diaz, a New Yorker via the Dominican Republic, has a startling revelation at a fruit stand.

44 Work of Art
Painting a well-defined body can be an artistic achievement. And you don't need to be an artist to perfect your brush stroke. But you must find your own model.



VENUS

On the Cover:

Model Dominquez wears original body paint by world renowned artist Billy.

Photographed exclusively for Venus by photographer De Alan Wilson.

Hair and Make up by Byron Barnes.

departments

10 Letters
'Your First Annual Family issue was wondeful.'

12 Home
Sleek new appliances make cooking efficient.

14 Previews
Whoopi Goldberg in 'What Makes a Family?'

26 Spirit
Rev. Kennedy
The Gayest Great-Grandmother in Town

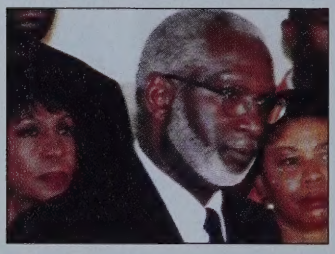
36 On The Down Low
Chameleon: Variation of a Homo-Thug. Nobody knows he messes around.

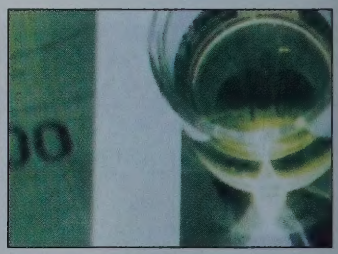
46 Celebrity Sightings
In Fashion We Trust: Lenny Kravitz, Macy Gray, Cuba Gooding, Jr.

48 SexTalk
How do you censor a parnter who loves to kiss and tell?

50 Books
Gay Star Signs, The Greatest Taboo, What If Someone I Know is Gay?

58 Legendary
Langston Hughes, poet extraordinaire, Renaissance man.





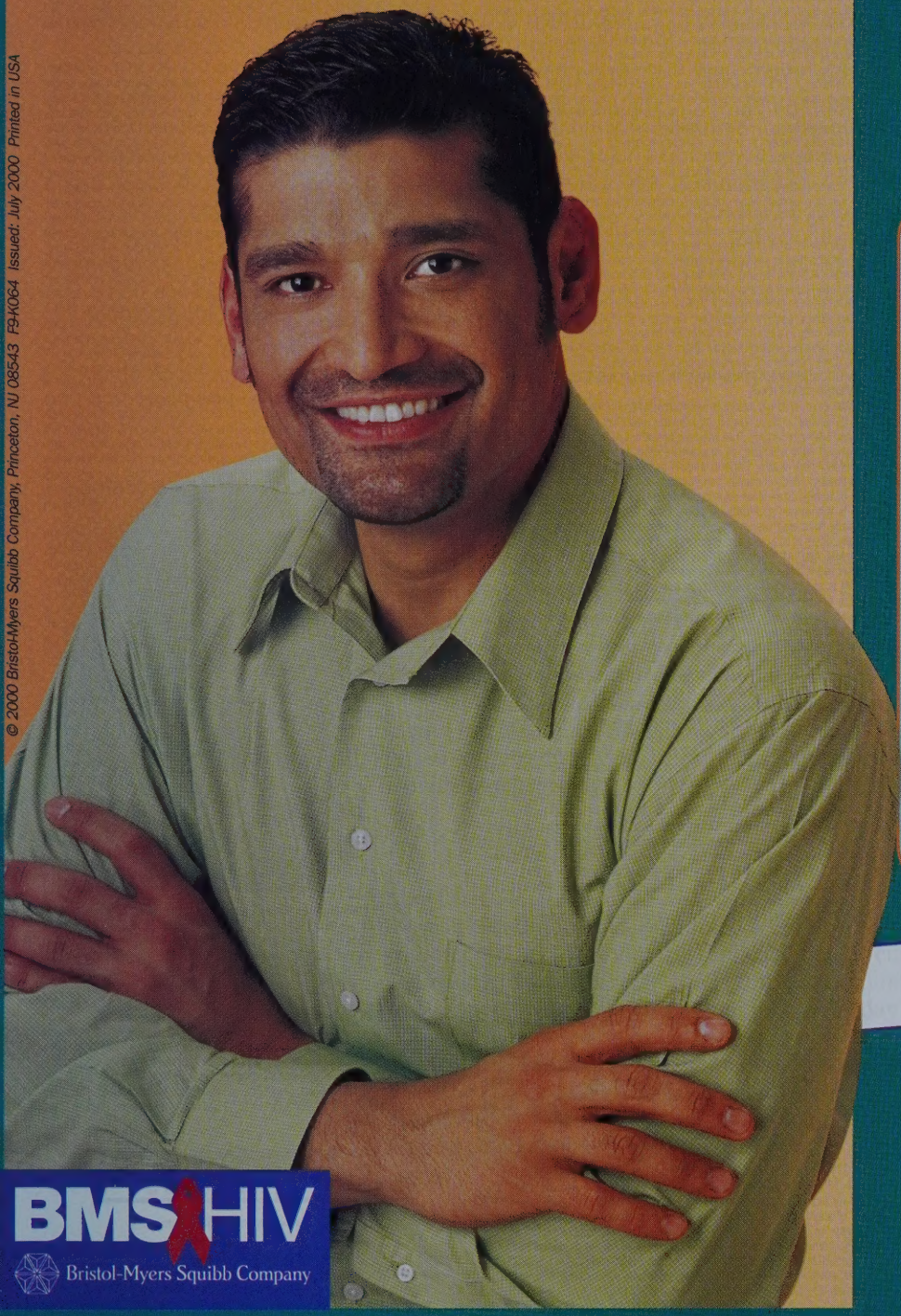
24 One Voice
The Congressional Black Caucus joins the U.S. Surgeon General to launch a gospel tour.

53 Mo' Money
Who wants to be a Millionaire? It's never too early or too late to start investing.

40 Unwired
The fusion of fashion and technology is future present in a 'Brave New Unwired World.'

19 On Trial
HIV vaccine is the subject of clinical trials in South Africa and United States.

"ZERIT works for many of my friends. I gotta believe it can work for me. I'm positive."



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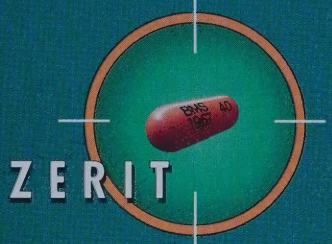
#1 prescribed HIV brand in combination therapy[1]

One small capsule twice a day with or without food



Powerful enough in combination therapy to keep viral load down[2]

Generally Well Tolerated

INDICATION:

ZERIT (stavudine) in combination with other antiretroviral agents is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection.

SAFETY INFORMATION:

An increase of lactic acid in the blood, an enlarged liver and liver failure, which can cause death have been reported. Fatal and non-fatal pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) has occurred with Zerit when taken in combination with didanosine and other HIV drugs.

ZERIT may cause numbness, tingling or pain in the hands or feet (neuropathy). This risk is increased in patients with advanced HIV disease or a history of neuropathy. If you are taking Zerit in combination with other medicines that may cause similar side effects, you may have a higher chance of developing these effects. Frequent side effects in triple combination regimens are nausea, headache, diarrhea, rash, vomiting and neuropathy. Zerit does not cure HIV or prevent passing HIV to others.

1) IMS NPA Prescription Data 4/99 - 4/00.
2) 83% (49/59) and 49% (49/101) of patients taking ZERIT with lamivudine and indinavir had viral load undetectable at 48 weeks in an as treated and intent to treat analysis respectively. (START 1. Data on file, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company).

1-888-896-5508 (toll free) or visit www.ZERIT.com

Ask your doctor about

ZERIT®

(stavudine) CAPSULES / POWDER FOR ORAL SOLUTION

ALSO KNOWN AS d4T

Please see the adjacent page for more information about ZERIT.

BMS HIV
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

℞ ONLY

ZERIT® (stavudine)

ZERIT® (stavudine) Capsules
ZERIT® (stavudine) for Oral Solution

Brief Summary of Prescribing Information, 8/00. For complete prescribing information, please consult official package circular.

WARNING
LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING STAVUDINE AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

FATAL AND NONFATAL PANCREATITIS HAVE OCCURRED DURING THERAPY WHEN ZERIT WAS PART OF A COMBINATION REGIMEN THAT INCLUDED DIDANOSINE, WITH OR WITHOUT HYDROXYUREA, IN BOTH TREATMENT-NAIVE AND TREATMENT-EXPERIENCED PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF DEGREE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSION (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE
ZERIT® (stavudine), in combination with other antiretroviral agents, is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection (see CLINICAL STUDIES).

CLINICAL STUDIES
Combination Therapy: The combination use of ZERIT is based on the results of clinical studies in HIV-infected patients in double- and triple-combination regimens with other antiretroviral agents. One of these studies (START 1) was a multicenter, randomized, open-label study comparing ZERIT (40 mg twice daily) plus lamivudine plus indinavir to zidovudine plus lamivudine plus indinavir in 202 treatment-naive patients. Both regimens resulted in a similar magnitude of inhibition of HIV RNA levels and increases in CD4 cell counts through 48 weeks. **Monotherapy:** The efficacy of ZERIT was demonstrated in a randomized, double-blind study (AI455-019, conducted 1992-1994) comparing ZERIT with zidovudine in 822 patients with a spectrum of HIV-related symptoms. The outcome in terms of progression of HIV disease and death was similar for both drugs.

CONTRAINDICATIONS
ZERIT is contraindicated in patients with clinically significant hypersensitivity to stavudine or to any of the components contained in the formulation.

WARNINGS
1. Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis/Hepatic Failure: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including stavudine and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. In addition, deaths attributed to hepatotoxicity have occurred in patients receiving the combination of ZERIT, didanosine, and hydroxyurea. Particular caution should be exercised when administering ZERIT to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with ZERIT should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations). An increased risk of hepatotoxicity, which may be fatal, may occur in patients treated with ZERIT in combination with didanosine and hydroxyurea compared to when ZERIT is used alone. Patients treated with this combination should be closely monitored for signs of liver toxicity. **2. Peripheral Neuropathy:** Peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet, has been reported in patients receiving ZERIT therapy. Peripheral neuropathy has occurred more frequently in patients with advanced HIV disease, a history of neuropathy, or concurrent neurotoxic drug therapy, including didanosine (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). **3. Pancreatitis:** Fatal and nonfatal pancreatitis have occurred during therapy when ZERIT was part of a combination regimen that included didanosine, with or without hydroxyurea, in both treatment-naive and treatment-experienced patients, regardless of degree of immunosuppression. The combination of ZERIT and didanosine (with or without hydroxyurea) and any other agents that are toxic to the pancreas should be suspended in patients with suspected pancreatitis. Reinstitution of ZERIT after a confirmed diagnosis of pancreatitis should be undertaken with particular caution and close patient monitoring. The new regimen should contain neither didanosine nor hydroxyurea.

PRECAUTIONS
Information for Patients (See **Patient Information Leaflet.**): Patients should be informed that an important toxicity of ZERIT is peripheral neuropathy. Patients should be aware that peripheral neuropathy is manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in hands or feet, and that these symptoms should be reported to their physicians. Patients should be counseled that peripheral neuropathy occurs with greatest frequency in patients who have advanced HIV disease or a history of peripheral neuropathy, and that dose modification and/or discontinuation of ZERIT may be required if toxicity develops. Caregivers of young children receiving ZERIT therapy should be instructed regarding detection and reporting of peripheral neuropathy. Patients should be informed that when ZERIT is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when ZERIT is used alone. An increased risk of pancreatitis, which may be fatal, may occur in patients treated with the combination of ZERIT and didanosine, with or without hydroxyurea. Patients treated with this combination should be closely monitored for symptoms of pancreatitis. An increased risk of hepatotoxicity, which may be fatal, may occur in patients treated with ZERIT in combination with didanosine and hydroxyurea. Patients treated with this combination should be closely monitored for signs of liver toxicity. Patients should be informed that ZERIT is not a cure for HIV infection, and that they may continue to acquire illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised to remain under the care of a physician when using ZERIT. They should be advised that ZERIT therapy has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the long-term effects of ZERIT are unknown at this time. Patients should be informed that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that HIV-infected mothers not nurse newborn infants to reduce the risk of postnatal transmission of HIV infection. **Drug Interactions:** Zidovudine may competitively inhibit the intracellular phosphorylation of stavudine. Therefore, use of zidovudine in combination with ZERIT is not recommended. (See **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY** in full prescribing information.) **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility:** In 2-year carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats, stavudine was noncarcinogenic at doses which produced exposures (AUC) 39 and 168 times, respectively, human exposure at the recommended clinical dose. Benign and malignant liver tumors in mice and rats and malignant urinary bladder tumors in male rats occurred at levels of exposure 250 (mice) and 732 (rats) times human exposure at the recommended clinical dose. Stavudine was not mutagenic in the Ames, *E. coli* reverse mutation, or the CHO/HGPRT mammalian cell forward gene mutation assays, with and without metabolic activation. Stavudine produced positive results in the *in vitro* human lymphocyte clastogenesis and mouse fibroblast assays, and in the *in vivo* mouse micronucleus test. In the *in vitro* assays, stavudine elevated the frequency of chromosome aberrations in human lymphocytes (concentrations of 25 to 250 µg/mL, without metabolic activation) and increased the frequency of transformed foci in mouse fibroblast cells (concentrations of 25 to 2500 µg/mL, with and without metabolic activation). In the *in vivo* micronucleus assay, stavudine was clastogenic in bone marrow cells following oral stavudine administration to mice at dosages of 600 to 2000 mg/kg/day for 3 days. No evidence of impaired fertility was seen in rats with exposures (based on C_{max}) up to 216 times that observed following a clinical dosage of 1 mg/kg/day. **Pregnancy:** Pregnancy "Category C". Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and rabbits with exposures (based on C_{max}) up to 399 and 183 times, respectively, of that seen at a clinical dosage of 1 mg/kg/day and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. The incidence in fetuses of a common skeletal variation, unossified or incomplete ossification of sternebra, was increased in rats at 399 times human exposure, while no effect was observed at 216 times human exposure. A slight post-implantation loss was noted at 216 times the human exposure with no effect noted at approximately 135 times the human exposure. An increase in early rat neonatal mortality (birth to 4 days of age) occurred at 399 times the human exposure, while survival of neonates was unaffected at approximately 135 times the human exposure. A study in rats showed that stavudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta. The concentration in fetal tissue was approximately one-half the concentration in maternal plasma. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, stavudine should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed. **Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry:** To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to stavudine and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263. **Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breast-feed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV.** Studies in lactating rats demonstrated that stavudine is excreted in milk. Although it is not known whether stavudine is excreted in human milk, there exists the potential for adverse effects from stavudine in nursing infants. Because of both the potential for HIV transmission and the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, **mothers should be instructed not to breast-feed if they are receiving ZERIT (stavudine). Pediatric Use:** Use of stavudine in pediatric patients is supported by evidence from adequate and well-controlled studies of stavudine in adults with additional pharmacokinetic and safety data in pediatric patients. Adverse events that were reported to occur in 105 pediatric patients receiving ZERIT 2 mg/kg/day for a median of 6.4 months in study ACTG 240 were generally similar to those reported in adults. Stavudine pharmacokinetics have been evaluated in 25 HIV-infected pediatric patients ranging in age from 5 weeks to 15 years and in weight from 2 to 43 kg after I.V. or oral administration of single doses and twice daily regimens (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY**, Table 1 in full prescribing information). **Geriatric Use:** Clinical studies of ZERIT did not include sufficient numbers of patients aged 65 years and over to determine whether they respond differently than younger patients. Greater sensitivity of some older individuals to the effects of ZERIT cannot be ruled out. In a monotherapy Expanded Access Program for patients with advanced HIV infection, peripheral neuropathy or peripheral neuropathic symptoms were observed in 15 of 40 (38%) elderly patients receiving 40 mg twice daily and 8 of 51 (16%) elderly patients receiving 20 mg twice daily. Of the approximately 12,000 patients enrolled in the Expanded Access Program, peripheral neuropathy or peripheral neuropathic symptoms developed in 30% of patients receiving 40 mg twice daily and 25% of patients receiving 20 mg twice daily. Elderly patients should be closely monitored for signs and symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. ZERIT is known to be substantially excreted by the kidney, and the risk of toxic reactions to this drug may be greater in patients with impaired renal function. Because elderly patients are more likely to have decreased renal function, it may be useful to monitor renal function. Dose adjustment is recommended for patients with renal impairment (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Dosage Adjustment**).

ADVERSE REACTIONS
Adults: ZERIT therapy has been associated with peripheral neuropathy, which can be severe, is dose related, and occurs more frequently in patients being treated with neurotoxic drug therapy, including didanosine, in patients with advanced HIV infection, or in patients who have previously experienced peripheral neuropathy. Patients should be monitored for the development of neuropathy, which is usually manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the feet or hands. Stavudine-related peripheral neuropathy may resolve if therapy is withdrawn promptly. In some cases, symptoms may worsen temporarily following discontinuation of therapy. If symptoms resolve completely, patients may tolerate resumption of treatment at one-half the dose (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**). If neuropathy recurs after resumption of ZERIT, permanent discontinuation of ZERIT should be considered. When ZERIT is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when ZERIT is used alone. Pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, and liver function abnormalities occur more frequently in patients treated with the combination of ZERIT and didanosine, with or without hydroxyurea. Fatal pancreatitis and hepatotoxicity may occur more frequently in patients treated with ZERIT in combination with didanosine and hydroxyurea (see **WARNINGS** and **PRECAUTIONS**). Selected clinical adverse events that occurred in adult patients receiving ZERIT in a controlled monotherapy study (Study AI455-019) are provided by percentages as follows: *ZERIT 40 mg twice daily (n=412)*– Headache (54), Diarrhea (50), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (52), Rash (40), Nausea and Vomiting (39); and *zidovudine 200 mg 3 times daily (n=402)*–Headache (49), Diarrhea (44), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (39), Rash (35), Nausea and Vomiting (44). Study AI455-019 had a median duration of stavudine therapy = 79 weeks and a median duration of zidovudine therapy = 53 weeks. Pancreatitis was observed in three of the 412 adult patients who received ZERIT in a controlled monotherapy study. Selected clinical adverse events that occurred in antiretroviral naive adult patients receiving ZERIT from two controlled combination studies are provided by percentages as follows: START 1—*ZERIT+lamivudine+indinavir (n=100) with a duration of 48 weeks*– Nausea (43), Diarrhea (34), Headache (25), Rash (18), Vomiting (18), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (8); *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=102)*– Nausea (63), Diarrhea (16), Headache (26), Rash (13), Vomiting (33), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (7). START 2—*ZERIT+didanosine+indinavir (n=102) with a duration of 48 weeks*– Nausea (53), Diarrhea (45), Headache (46), Rash (30), Vomiting (30), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (21); *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=103)*– Nausea (67), Diarrhea (39), Headache (37), Rash (18), Vomiting (35), Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy (10). START 2 compared two triple-combination regimens in 205 treatment-naive patients. Patients received either ZERIT (40 mg twice daily) plus didanosine plus indinavir or zidovudine plus lamivudine plus indinavir. Pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in patients treated with ZERIT plus didanosine, with or without hydroxyurea, in controlled clinical studies and in postmarketing reports. Selected laboratory abnormalities reported in a controlled monotherapy study (Study AI455-019) are provided by percentage with the following parameters: *ZERIT 40 mg twice daily (n=412)*– AST (SGOT) >5.0 x ULN (upper limit of normal)–11%, ALT (SGPT) >5.0 x ULN–13%, Amylase ≥1.4 x ULN–14% and *zidovudine 200 mg 3 times daily (n=402)*– AST (SGOT) >5.0 x ULN–10%, ALT (SGPT) >5.0 x ULN–11%, Amylase ≥1.4 x ULN–13%. Data presented for patients of Study AI455-019 for whom laboratory evaluations were performed. Study AI455-019 had a median duration of stavudine therapy = 79 weeks and a median duration of zidovudine therapy = 53 weeks. Selected laboratory abnormalities reported in two controlled combination studies, START 1 and START 2 are provided Grades 3-4 presented first by percentage as follows: (Grades 3-4) START 1—*ZERIT+lamivudine+indinavir (n=100)*– Bilirubin >2.6 x ULN (upper limit of normal)-7%, SGOT (AST) >5 x ULN-5%, SGPT (ALT) >5 x ULN-6%, GGT >5 x ULN-2%, Lipase >2 x ULN-6%, Amylase >2 x ULN-4%; *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=102)*– Bilirubin >2.6 x ULN-6%, SGOT (AST) >5 x ULN-2%, SGPT (ALT) >5 x ULN-2%, GGT >5 x ULN-2%, Lipase >2 x ULN-3%, Amylase >2 x ULN-<1%. Percentages for (Grades 3-4) START 2—*ZERIT (stavudine)+didanosine+indinavir (n=102)*– Bilirubin >2.6 x ULN-16%, SGOT (AST) >5 x ULN-7%, SGPT (ALT) >5 x ULN-8%, GGT >5 x ULN-5%, Lipase >2 x ULN-5%, Amylase >2 x ULN-8%; *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=103)*– Bilirubin >2.6 x ULN-8%, SGOT (AST) >5 x ULN-7%, SGPT (ALT) >5 x ULN-5%, GGT >5 x ULN-2%, Lipase >2 x ULN-5%, Amylase >2 x ULN-2%. Percentages for (All Grades) START 1—*ZERIT+lamivudine+indinavir (n=100)*– Total Bilirubin-65%, SGOT (AST)-42%, SGPT (ALT)-40%, GGT-15%, Lipase-27%, Amylase-21%; *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=102)*– Total Bilirubin-60%, SGOT (AST)-20%, SGPT (ALT)-20%, GGT-8%, Lipase-12%, Amylase-19%. Percentages for (All Grades) START 2—*ZERIT+didanosine+indinavir (n=102)*– Total Bilirubin-68%, SGOT (AST)-53%, SGPT (ALT)-50%, GGT-28%, Lipase-26%, Amylase-31%; *zidovudine+lamivudine+indinavir (n=103)*– Total Bilirubin-55%, SGOT (AST)-20%, SGPT (ALT)-18%, GGT-12%, Lipase-19%, Amylase-17%. **Observed During Clinical Practice:** The following events have been identified during post-approval use of ZERIT. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to their seriousness, frequency of reporting, causal connection to ZERIT, or a combination of these factors. ***Body as a Whole-*** abdominal pain, allergic reaction, and chills/fever. ***Digestive Disorders-*** anorexia. ***Exocrine Gland Disorders*** - pancreatitis [including fatal cases (see **WARNINGS**)]. ***Hematologic Disorders-*** anemia, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia. ***Liver-*** lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see **WARNINGS**), hepatitis and liver failure. ***Musculoskeletal-*** myalgia. ***Nervous-*** insomnia. **Pediatric Patients:** Adverse reactions and serious laboratory abnormalities in pediatric patients were similar in type and frequency to those seen in adult patients.

OVERDOSAGE
Experience with adults treated with 12 to 24 times the recommended daily dosage revealed no acute toxicity. Complications of chronic overdosage include peripheral neuropathy and hepatic toxicity. Stavudine can be removed by hemodialysis; the mean ±SD hemodialysis clearance of stavudine is 120 ± 18 mL/min. Whether stavudine is eliminated by peritoneal dialysis has not been studied.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION
The interval between doses of ZERIT should be 12 hours. ZERIT may be taken without regard to meals. **Adults:** The recommended dose based on body weight is as follows: 40 mg twice daily for patients ≥60 kg and 30 mg twice daily for patients <60 kg. **Pediatrics:** The recommended dose for pediatric patients weighing less than 30 kg is 1 mg/kg/dose, given every 12 hours. Pediatric patients weighing 30 kg or greater should receive the recommended adult dosage. **Dosage Adjustment:** Patients should be monitored for the development of peripheral neuropathy, which is usually manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the feet or hands. These symptoms may be difficult to detect in young children (see **WARNINGS**). If these symptoms develop during treatment, stavudine therapy should be interrupted. Symptoms may resolve if therapy is withdrawn promptly. In some cases, symptoms may worsen temporarily following discontinuation of therapy. If symptoms resolve completely, patients may tolerate resumption of treatment at one-half the recommended dose: 20 mg twice daily for patients ≥60 kg and 15 mg twice daily for patients <60 kg. If neuropathy recurs after resumption of ZERIT, permanent discontinuation of ZERIT should be considered. ***Renal Impairment-*** ZERIT may be administered to adult patients with impaired renal function with adjustment in dose by patient weight as follows: Creatinine Clearance (mL/min) of >50 (**≥60 kg**-40 mg every 12 hours and **<60 kg**-30 mg every 12 hours); Creatinine Clearance (mL/min) of 26-50 (**≥60 kg**-20 mg every 12 hours and **<60 kg**-15 mg every 12 hours); Creatinine Clearance (mL/min) of 10-25 (**≥60 kg**-20 mg every 24 hours and **<60 kg**-15 mg every 24 hours). Since urinary excretion is also a major route of elimination of stavudine in pediatric patients, the clearance of stavudine may be altered in children with renal impairment. Although there are insufficient data to recommend a specific dose adjustment of ZERIT in this patient population, a reduction in the dose and/or an increase in the interval between doses should be considered. ***Hemodialysis Patients-*** The recommended dose is 20 mg every 24 hours (≥60 kg) or 15 mg every 24 hours (<60 kg), administered after the completion of hemodialysis and at the same time of day on non-dialysis days.

Method of Preparation: ZERIT for Oral Solution - Prior to dispensing, the pharmacist must constitute the dry powder with purified water to a concentration of 1 mg stavudine per mL of solution, as follows: **1.** Add 202 mL of purified water to the container. **2.** Shake container vigorously until the powder dissolves completely. Constitution in this way produces 200 mL (deliverable volume) of 1 mg/mL stavudine solution. The solution may appear slightly hazy. **3.** Dispense solution in original container with measuring cup provided. Instruct patient to shake the container vigorously prior to measuring each dose and to store the tightly closed container in a refrigerator, 36° to 46°F (2° to 8°C). Discard any unused portion after 30 days.

HOW SUPPLIED
ZERIT® (stavudine) Capsules are available in the following strengths and configurations of plastic bottles with child-resistant closures:

Table 1

Product Strength	Capsule Shell Color	Markings on Capsule (in Black Ink)	Capsules per Bottle	NDC No.
15 mg	Light yellow & dark red	BMS 1964 15	60	0003-1964-01
20 mg	Light brown	BMS 1965 20	60	0003-1965-01
30 mg	Light orange & dark orange	BMS 1966 30	60	0003-1966-01
40 mg	Dark orange	BMS 1967 40	60	0003-1967-01

ZERIT® (stavudine) for Oral Solution is a dye-free, fruit-flavored powder that provides 1 mg of stavudine per mL of solution upon constitution with water. Directions for solution preparation are included on the product label and in the **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION** section of this insert. ZERIT for Oral Solution (**NDC** No. 0003-1968-01) is available in child-resistant containers that provide 200 mL of solution after constitution with water.

US Patent No.: 4,978,655

Storage: ZERIT Capsules should be stored in tightly closed containers at controlled room temperature, 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C). ZERIT for Oral Solution should be protected from excessive moisture and stored in tightly closed containers at controlled room temperature, 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C). After constitution, store tightly closed containers of ZERIT for Oral Solution in a refrigerator, 36° to 46°F (2° to 8°C). Discard any unused portion after 30 days.

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IMMUNOLOGY

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Princeton, NJ 08543
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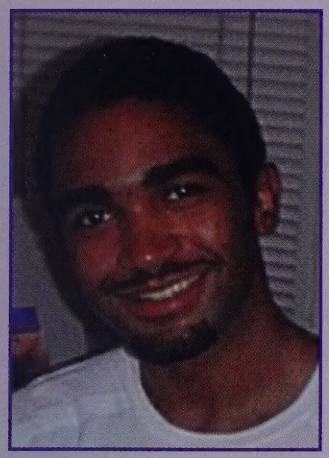


Damion Mannings,
Editor at Large

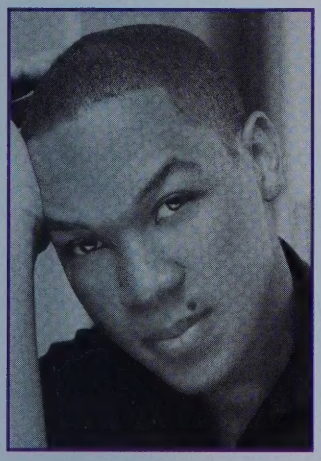
I recently received a call from an old friend whom I had not spoken to in ages. In the middle of our conversation he disclosed to me that he was no longer interested in men. I was curious. It seems this particular man had become jaded with the brothas. As a matter of fact, I've heard several gay men confess a disinterest in men. I presume there are infinite reasons why a gay man would loose his attraction to men. Perhaps he is ready to settle down in a committed relationship and no longer wants to put up with disco divas or whimsical homie-sexuals. But what happens to the desire? I was equally startled when my friend told me that he was pursing relationships with women. I didn't know he could do that. But he had discovered that he was more compatible with females. I mean, this is a handsome man who had fans on either side of the fence. Whatever his decision, I was happy for him.

I often thought bisexuals had the best of both worlds. A woman can be involved in a lesbian relationship but still seek occasional masculine pleasure. And (some) homo-thugs are a mysterious specimen of bisexuals. You know, the brotha with the girl and two kids--but he makes time to satisfy his nature in the clandestine walks of life, with other men loving men. Most important, out bisexuals feel ostracized because they are misunderstood by other queers. Theirs is a fascinating duality, and the politics that halo a bisexual's sexuality is intense.

And speaking of sex, don't you feel that beautiful man on our cover! Photographer DeAlan Wilson and the celebrated artist, Billy, have given us a wonderful New Years' gift: Tribal Affair. These bold and evocative pictures capture a timeless grace that brings to mind the fierce composure of a warrior. I talked with photographer and painter about the shoot and they summed up the collaboration as being unforgettable. See the photos and decide for yourself.

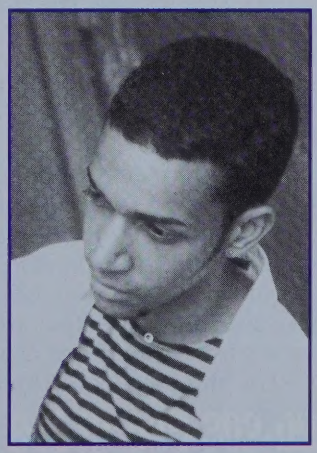
It's a New Year and we have a New Look! It's our gift to you. Please send us your letters and share your thoughts and ideas with us. We would like to know what's on your minds. Whatever your dreams and desires may be, stay true to yourself. And here's to the year ahead!

_Damion Mannings



DeAlan Wilson

is a fashion photographer who shoots for national publications and companies including Venus Black Elegance, Belle and Iman Cosmetics. He first encountered the artwork of renown painter Billy while attending the Broadway show "RENT." "I looked up at the ceiling in the show's lobby and the entire thing was one great big hand-painted mural by Billy. His art was so unique, I knew I had to connect with him for a fashion story." *Tribal Affair*, pg. 40 is the result. More of DeAlan's work can be seen at www.dealanphoto.com.



Eugenio A. Diaz

Born in the Dominican Republic in 1976, Diaz says he migrated to the "US while still malleable and is currently surviving in Tokyo on a pittance." He describes himself as being "open to [any] experience unless it's Monday morning, then I'm generally disgusted and unimpressed." Diaz spent a year studying in Madrid before shuttling to Japan where he presently teaches English as a second language. His article, *Strange Fruit*, on pg. 39 is a witty tale of identity and perception as a man of color living in present-day Japan.

letters

"I love being a father and my children are my greatest inspiration."

Daddy Dearest

I read your family issue (Intimate Portraits of Gay Black Fathers, Winter 2000) and loved the stories.

I am a gay man and my partner and I have two wonderful children. I love being a father and my children are my greatest inspiration. It is important for gays and lesbians to be acknowledged or our hard work. I thank you.

Steve Allen, Detroit, MI

Single Father

Your First Annual Family issue was wonderful. I'm a single father of a beautful little girl who will be two years old soon. Her mother is aware that I am bisexual, although I choose to date men only for a while. Perhaps by next year's family issue, I'll have a lover and you can include our family.

Tanga La'Mar Reliford, Bronx, NY

Fighting and Educating

Your piece on the community programs that help to educate people about AIDS in the black community (Winning the War on AIDS, Winter 2000) helped me to understand that these resources are a God send. I didn't know much about safe sex except using protection. Now I know that my attitude and self-esteem are important factors that can help me to stay safe. I think that agencies for black gay men are doing an excellent job.

Jacob T., Kansas City, MO

You Go Girl!

The feature on Staceyann Chin (Disciple of the Spoken Word, Winter 2000) was fierce! I have seen her performances and I think her work is phenomenal. She has a very impressive stage presence. Your article gave me a more personal and charismatic view of this great poet. And she is so sexy.

Camille, Rochester, NY

VENUS

The Proud Recipient of

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Voted Best Black Same-Gender-Loving Publication
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VENUS

FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE LIFE

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Krups has revamped everyday kitchen appliances with an infusion of technology and design. The sleek new line of culinary devices will make you want to spend more time in your kitchen than in trendy cafes. And the updated features make the preparation of food more efficient. Even if you are not a guru like B. Smith, cooking can still be fun. Making your own meal with these new gadgets will leave a hearty impression on a first date. Bon appetit.

Tea Kettle

The "Aquacontrol," cordless electric tea kettle is perfect for tea drinkers. This high-tech kettle is a stainless steal heating element, which boils water quickly. Some of the features prevent boiling water from splashing out, and automatic shut-off when water reaches a boil or the water is too low. Available in black or white.

WaffleMaker

Skip brunch at IHOP and make your own scrumptious Belgian waffles with the the "Chrome Wafflechef." KRUPS "Wafflechef" quickly and easily makes four waffles at a time. The non-stick interior cooking surface allows the waffles to slide out perfectly and is easy to clean. Add whip cream, blueberries or your favorite topping when done.

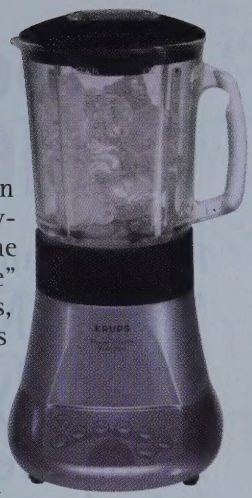
Indoor Grill

Canyon Delux Smokless Indoor Grill is virtually smokeless as well as portable and convenionent. The enamel coated cast iron plate is scratch resistant and absorbs heat for higher cooking temperatures and faster results. Cool touch handles for safe operation and stainless steel drip tray catching food drippings make for easy cooking and cleaning.

Vegetable Steamer

For those of you who want to pursue more healthy eating habits, the "Optisteam Plus" two tier combination vegetable steamer/rice cooker features transparent steaming trays (14 cup and 13 cup) plus a six-cup rice bowl. Equipped with a patented external fill spout, the "Optisteam Plus" can be easily refilled during use. The larger steaming tray can also be divided into two compartments to cook several different types of food at once, while the oblong design of the tray fits longer shaped foods such as fish, corn on the cob, and asparagus. The trays and bowls are dishwasher safe. Try a delicious appetizer of Bruschetta and garlic bread at your next cocktail party.

Blender



Juice lovers can blend fresh beverages with the "Power Xtreme" Jar Blenders, which comes with eight different functions including an "Auto Ice Crusher" and six different speeds to stir, whip, chop, mix, puree and liquefy. The "Juice Extractor", is superb for smoothie lovers with a preference for natural refreshments. Equipped with a .25hp motor, this juicer is the perfect addition to a healthy lifestyle. The Extractor provides fast, convenient juicing of an assortment of fruits and vegetables with a 44 oz. capacity container. All parts are dishwasher safe with the exception of the filter. Try a delicious smoothie after your next workout.

Espresso Machine

Espresso lovers can expect a lot from "Gusto," the compact new espresso machine. Krups "Gusto" features a sleek stainless steel system that generates 15 cups of authentic cream-topped espresso, as well as delicious cappuccino and lattes. Indicator lights and control buttons make brewing and steaming a touch away. Perfect for espresso connoisseurs everywhere.

RECIPES

Strawberry and Banana smoothie

1 1/2 cups frozen yogurt

1 cup ice
1 cup orange juice
1/2 cup fresh sliced strawberries
1/2 cup bananas

In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until velvety smooth.

Bruschetta

3 ripe tomatoes
1 small onion
2 tablespoons fresh basil (chopped)
1-2 garlic cloves
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
24 slices of French bread
2 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Chop onion and tomatoes into small pieces in food processor. Mix in basil. Add minced garlic. Add salt and pepper, mix. Slice bread on an angle. Brush bread lightly with olive oil. Bake 10-12 minutes in toaster oven till lightly browned. Scoop tomato mixture on bread. Serve. Makes 24 appetizers.

Whoopi Goldberg

Produces and stars in 'What Makes a Family?'

Lifetime Television's true story celebrating a landmark victory for lesbian parenting rights.

by Janice Rhoshalle Littlejohn

"Our story reflects the many ways the word 'family' is defined in today's society."

Lifetime, January 22, 9 PM ET/PT

Meet Sandy and Janine. They're a married, two-income earning couple living in a two-bedroom suburban home in Florida. They tend a garden, go to church and debate over taking turns to cook dinner. Sandy and Janine are also parents, raising a brown-eyed 5-year-old, Heather, who wants to be a prima ballerina. Oh...and they just happen to be lesbians. And all is right in their world. That is until Sandy dies, setting off a custody battle between Janine and Heather's blood relatives-Sandy's retired, blue-haired, bingo-playing parents who contend that the genes weave a stronger familial bond than love.

It's this twist to the much-ado debate over kinship-by-biology versus parentage-through-commitment that sets off this true-story-turned-TV-movie about Florida's landmark custody case starring Golden Globe-nominee Brook Shields (Janine) and Tony Award-winner Cherry Jones (Sandy) and executive produced by liberal powerhouse actors Barbara Streisand and Whoopi Goldberg.

"Our story reflects the many ways the word 'family' is defined in today's society," says Goldberg, who also co-stars in the two-hour heart-tugger as Janine's able civil rights attorney Terry Harrison who fought the case before Florida's court of appeals.

"This is about the basic human and civil rights which concern everyone. Because you never know when they are going to come after you next." Says Shields, iResearch shows, and it comes up during the trial in the film," she notes, ithat when children have been raise in a home that is not based on blood, they have turned out happy because they've grown up in a family that's based on honesty, love and communication."

Despite the film's sweet, happily ever after Tinsel Town ending, the reality that Florida remains the only state that outlaws adoption by homosexuals remains a sad note in our American narrative.

Vision
Commitment
Passion
Excitement
Empowerment
Growth
Teamwork

Come Work With Us.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN™

Imagine working to ensure basic equal rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. That's what we do every day at the Human Rights Campaign.

Chances are that HRC is like no place you've ever worked. Our environment is friendly, full of enthusiasm and professional.

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We offer competitive compensation and a great benefits package. We continue to build a workplace that values and celebrates diversity. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

Join us — and make a difference!

The following opportunities are open:

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- **Fundraising Professionals**
- **Information Technology Professionals**
- **Administrative Support Staff**
- **Internships & Fellowships**

To apply, please forward a letter of interest and resume to:

Human Rights Campaign
919 18th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20006
Fax: 202-216-1595 E-mail: careers@hrc.org

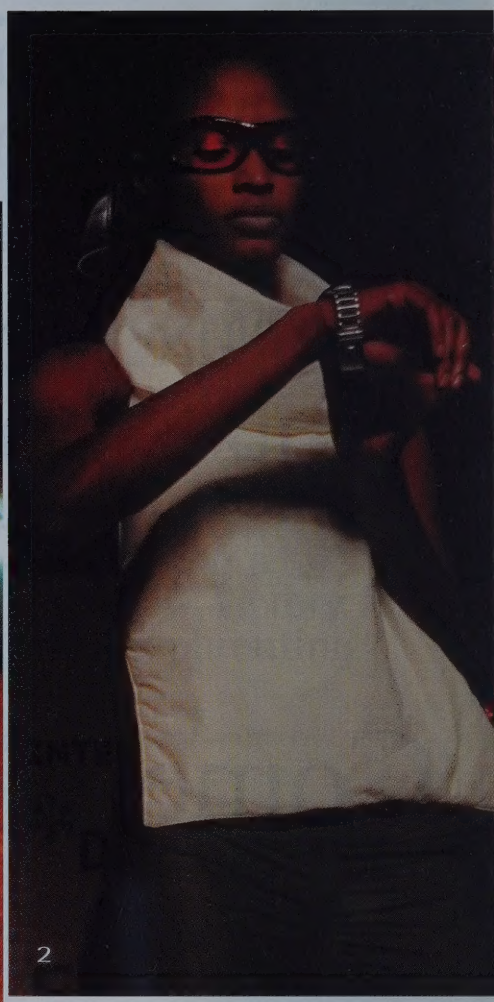
Or call (202) 628-4160 and ask for Human Resources.

"Brave New Unwired World"

Fashion Technology Showcase by Charmed Technology at the Internet World New York 2000

Photography by Tina Paul

1. Beat Machine
This glove contains piezo sensors that capture beats made by tapping your fingers and hands. These groovy beats can be uploaded to a website for custom sonic editing.



2

2. Beepwear Pro
It's a pager, it's a watch, and it's an organizer, right on your wrist! It can receive word or number messages in thousands of cities and towns across the U.S. It also seamlessly syncs with your home PC, from Timex and Motorola.

3. The Cube Personal Computing Tablet
Here is a smart and savvy way to create your own personal mobile network. From aQcess Technologies, it integrates a digital camera, a magnetic card reader, along with voice and handwriting recognition capabilities.

4. The P5
Change the way you interact with your PC and video games with this piece from Essential Reality. Simple and intuitive, the P5 places users into 3D worlds by capturing finger and hand motion.

5. Yada Yada

Put the internet in the Palm of your hand. Personalize your wireless web experience to access news, weather, sports scores and your financial portfolio.

6. Pocket Yada

Yada Yada puts the Internet in your pocket. Access the entire Internet from your Palm or Handspring with wireless web service. Read restaurant reviews, make reservations, get local movie listings and then order tickets online.

7. Charmed Necklace

Equipped with infrared transceivers, these jewelry pieces can store, transmit, and receive voice messages, business card data, and appointment reminders. These Internet connected necklaces and medallions can be produced in a variety of shapes and styles.

HIV vaccine trials to start soon in South Africa and USA

Words by S. Predrag
Edited by Steve Wakefield

"Should the vaccine prove successful
Alphavax will enter into agreements
with local manufacturers (in developing countries)
to keep the production costs as low as possible."

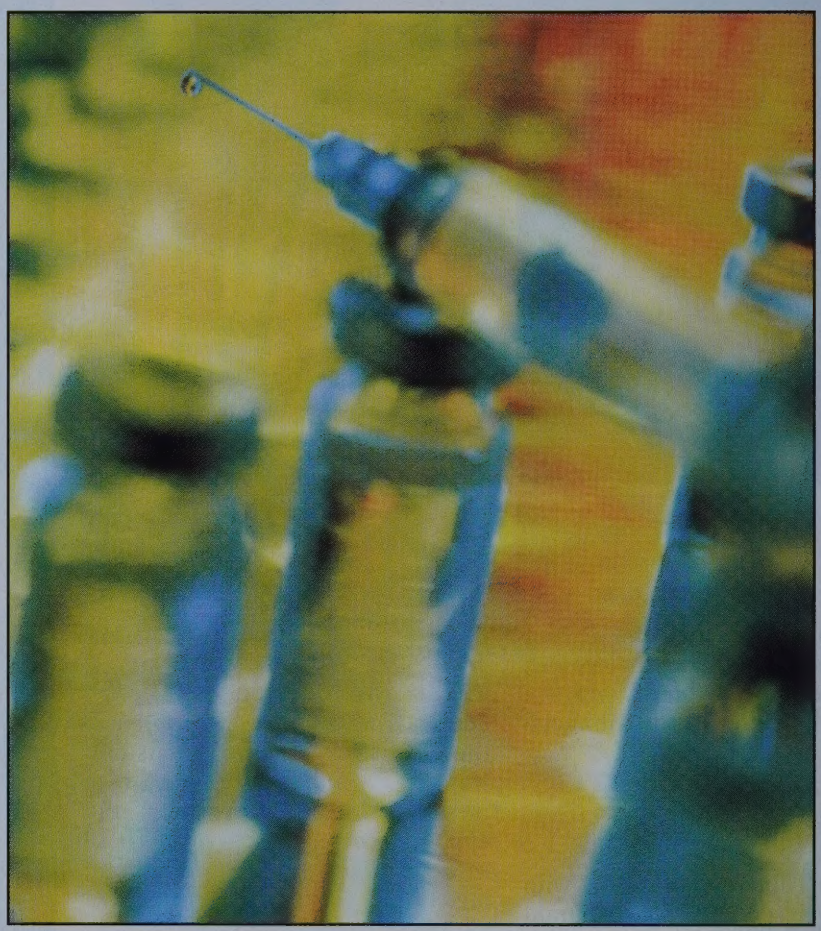
The first human trials of a new vaccine against HIV/AIDS will begin in South Africa and the United States. This was officially announced by the president of the South African Medical Research Council (MRC), Professor Malegapuru Makgoba.

This is good news for a country faced with an AIDS epidemic and whose president, Thabo Mbeki, has been accused of "flirting" with "dissident" AIDS scientists who are questioning the HIV-AIDS link.

The vaccine - officially called "a South African clade C-based Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis vector vaccine" - was developed by the South African Medical Research Council and the University of Cape Town in close collaboration with a U. S. - based company, Alphavax.

Basically, the vaccine is a hybrid or a combination of parts of the HIV virus and the horse virus (Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis). It reportedly aims to elicit an immune response in order to prevent people from acquiring HIV.

The Alphavax vaccine is said



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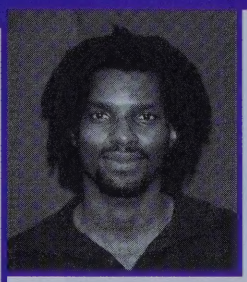
Third edition

Healthy Living

"Information is power. I support the efforts of Cothran Publications to disseminate health information to the African American community. It is now our responsibility to use this information, take action, educate ourselves and pass it on."

Dr. Stephen B. Thomas,
Emory University



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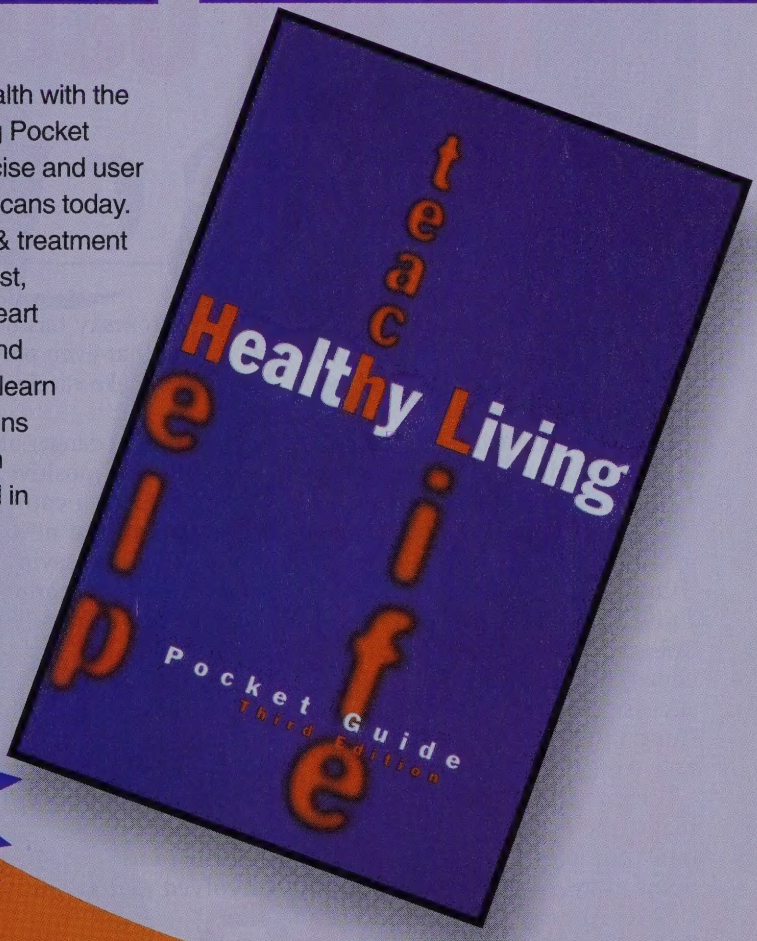

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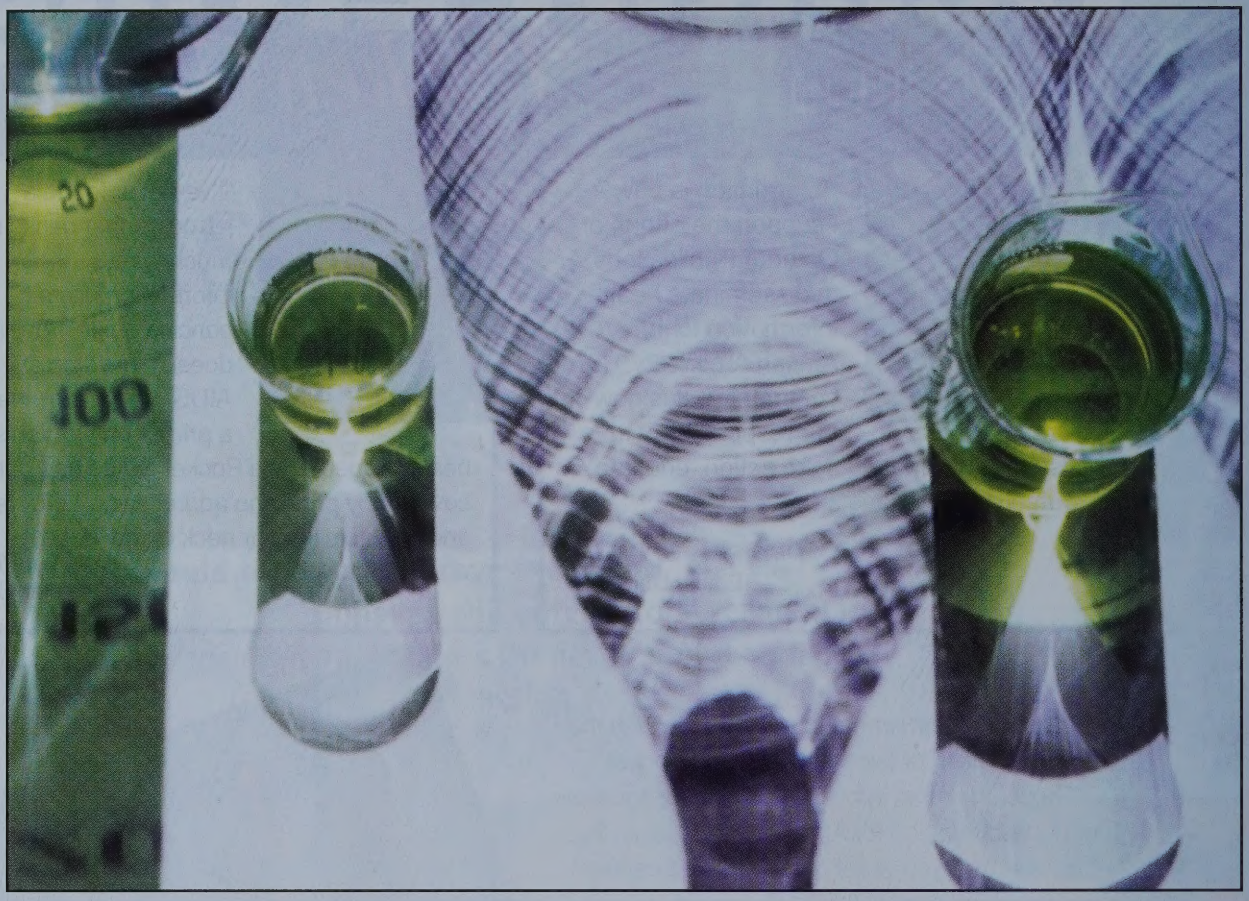


to be unable to replicate because it is a hybrid made of parts of two different viruses whose genes have been made defective.

A medical virologist and research coordinator for the South African Vaccine Initiative, Dr. Walter Prozesky, has said that the idea for the vaccine should be attributed to a professor at the University of North Carolina - Robert Johnstone. Dr. Prozesky added that animal tests have been successfully completed in the United States and the vaccine is now ready for human trials.

Emphasizing that, "It is known that if the horse virus gets into a human it goes straight to the immune system and switches it on," Dr. Prozesky said that scientists believe this particular combination of the HIV and horse viruses could create an immune reaction against HIV.

Dr. Prozesky has been quoted as saying that even partial immunity could make vaccination worthwhile.

As for the danger of volunteers becoming HIV-positive, the South African research coordinator was quoted in a local newspaper, *The Natal Witness* as saying, "The parts of the HIV virus cannot reconstitute themselves into the live virus - they're only half a car and can't drive on their own."

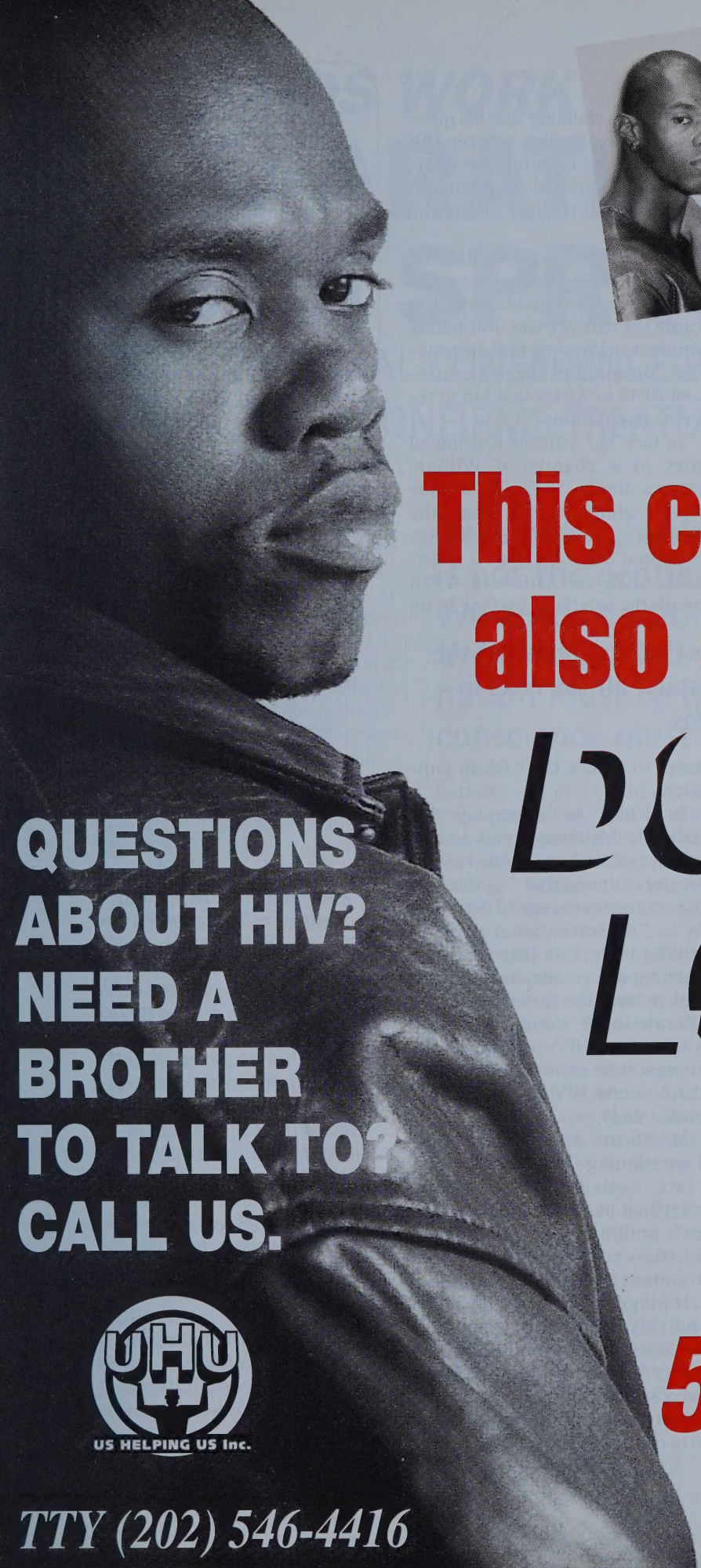
However, trials on human volunteers are not completely without risk. Even Dr. Prozesky admitted, "We need 'educatable' people for the first phase of the trials who will be able to understand all the risks involved and know the implications."

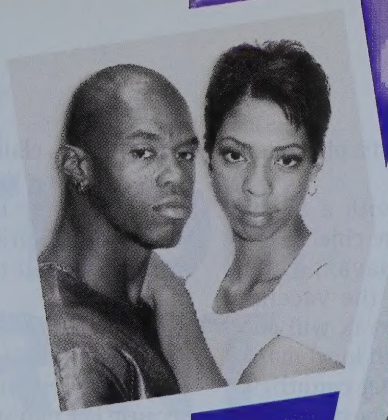
The human trials starting this February are only the first phase using 20 to 50 volunteers who will be tested, as Dr. Prozesky put it, "to see if the vaccine has any harmful effects and if it creates an immune response." Dr Prozesky claims that the best that can be expected from the vaccine is that it will immunize people against AIDS though it may alternatively allow for less severe infections or prevent HIV transmission.

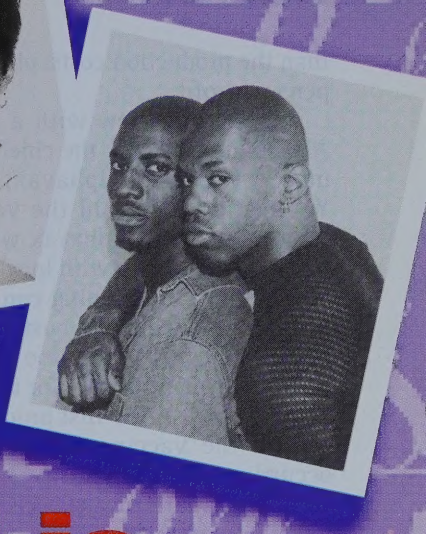
The second phase will involve larger numbers of volunteers of different ages and different doses of the vaccine will be tested. Tests will also be done on people who already have HIV or AIDS.

The third phase will include volunteers who will be injected with the vaccine or a placebo which will be the crucial test of the vaccine's effectiveness.

A US biotechnological company, Alphavax, which developed the vaccine, has a unique patent right agreement to sell the vaccine to developing countries for no more







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than the production costs, plus a ten percent profit.

In an interview with a South African daily, *Beeld*, the chief executive officer of Alphavax, Peter Young, said, "Should the vaccine prove successful Alphavax will enter into agreements with local manufacturers (in developing countries) to keep the production costs as low as possible. It is still far too early to determine what the price for the vaccine will be . . . The first production run of the vaccine is only now occurring."

Still, South Africa expects to pay up to 60 times less than western countries for the vaccine. This would be great news for many African and other developing countries faced with the AIDS pandemic and, at the same time, with chronic poverty (a majority of Africans live on less than one dollar a day).

One plan is for a patient in South Africa and one in the U. S. will be injected simultaneously, with a satellite link-up recording the event. Speaking at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (South Africa) Professor Makgoba said that the types of political and scientific choices being made now in relation to the HIV/AIDS epidemic might result in history judging South Africans as having collaborated in the "greatest genocide of our time." South Africa cannot afford "any more blunders or mixed messages," he warned, referring to South African President Thabo Mbeki's controversial views on the link between HIV and AIDS.

Namely, Mbeki has recently accused the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and multinational drug companies of allegedly conspiring to impose the view that HIV causes AIDS. Addressing South Africa's ruling party, ministers and members of parliament, Mbeki was quoted in the local press as claiming that his questions regarding the link between HIV and AIDS were harming the interests of multinational drug companies - hence all the fuss and media interest.

Mbeki's Minister of Health, Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang, was recently faced with public criticism because her ministry was distributing documents claiming that international conspirators allegedly introduced AIDS to Africa in a bid to reduce its population.

In fact, her officials distributed copies of a chapter of William Cooper's book, "Behold, a Pale Horse", which claims that the "Illuminati" - "a highly secretive international organization" - introduced AIDS to Africa in 1978 through the smallpox vaccine in an attempt to reduce the African population.

In order to downplay Dr. Tshabalala-Msimang's embarrassment, her officials responded to her critics by claiming that ". . . this was just a routine exchange of information . . ." However, what is really worrying is the fact that this is all happening in a country which is believed to have the fastest- growing AIDS rate in the world - it already has 4.2 million HIV- positive people (ten percent of its total population) and 1,600 new HIV cases are being recorded daily.

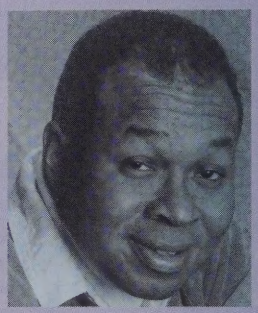
Most South African scientists are not questioning the HIV-AIDS link. In fact, some of them actively participated in the international research program which resulted in joint trials scheduled to start this year in the US and South Africa.

If all goes well with the trials - and this is still a big question mark due to the proven HIV capability to mutate fairly quickly - the vaccine could be ready for clinical use by the year 2005.

"We need educatable people for the first phase of the trials who will be able to understand all the risks involved and know the implications."

Thinking About Participating in a Clinical Trial?

More research is needed in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Individuals are encouraged to participate in research but only when you have been fully informed of all potential risks or harm and all potential benefits. Your research team or doctor will explain the study. You are given time to THINK about participation and discuss your decision with family and friends. There is also a chance to come back and ask questions before signing up to be in the research.



Steve Wakefield, Director of Community Education, HIV Vaccine Trials Network, and a Venus health editor, contributed to the article on Clinical Trials for an HIV Vaccine in S. Africa. He notes that while this is the first South African vaccine, other vaccines have been tested in over 70 trials involving thousands of persons in the US, Uganda, Canada, Amsterdam, and England. In early 2001, Black people in Haiti, Trinidad and Tobaggo and Brazil (as well as in the USA) will provide heroic leadership by volunteering for trials of other vaccine products. For additional info visit www.hvtn.org.

HIV/AIDS WORK
A MARATHON not a SPRINT

2-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE PUSHES TESTING AND CONFIRMS TREATMENT

by Al Cunningham

African Americans, hard-hit by AIDS diagnoses and deaths from AIDS, have access to the potential benefits of "highly active anti-retrovirus treatment" (HAART) against HIV, but far too few have been tested and enrolled in a regimen, according to speakers at last year's National Conference on African-Americans and AIDS in Washington, DC.

The two-day conference, sponsored by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Bristol-Myers Squibb, is the third annual meeting showcasing a parade of researchers, public health officers, and non-governmental activists. The gathering will take place February 17-21 at the Renaissance Washington Hotel in, D.C. Registration is free but move fast because the conference fills up quickly and you must register on line, (check venusmagazine.com for conference registration info.)

Viral load, toxicity, adherence, and other factors may interact in the effectiveness of various HAART "cocktails," but cultural issues of racism, homophobia and sexism, the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS, and trust of or access to healthcare in general remain significant barriers as well.

Invited guest speaker for 2001, Nelson Mandela, had not confrmed at time of press. Opening last year's conference, Phil Wilson, a gay African American activist, long-term survivor of AIDS, and founder of the African American AIDS Policy and Training Institute www.AAAinstitute.org, made the analogy between living with HIV/AIDS and running a marathon in his introduction of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Donna Shalala. "Too few African Americans are getting tested," Shalala said, "or getting access to care. The cost of treatment is high. The regimen of pills is difficult to follow. And prevention messages have not been targeted enough - or become accepted enough - in the African American community."

> "It is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened and the conscience must be roused."

Following Shalala, President Clinton's AIDS Policy "czar," Sandra Thurman, refuted the urban mythology suggesting that AIDS is no longer lethal, presenting statistics of the staggering rate of AIDS diagnosis and deaths from AIDS among African Americans and people on the sub-Saharan African continent. She quoted19th century African American activist Frederick Douglass, saying, "It is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened and the conscience must be roused." In wide-ranging and emotionally-charged remarks following Thurman, human rights leader Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. emphasized the need for visible African Americans to model the importance of testing, which he followed with a public test at a local HIV clinic for African Americans.

Later, Wilson reminded the crowd that men of color who have sex with other men are now 50 percent of newly diagnosed AIDS cases among men who have sex with men. "The tragedy of this particular statistic," Wilson said, "is that it did not have to happen. Men of color were disproportionately impacted in 1989 when they were 30 percent of AIDS cases among men who have sex with men. The question is what are we going to do this time?"

ONE Voice

"We must get HIV positive individuals into care and work harder to prevent the further spread of this disease."

GOSPEL ARTISTS ADDRESS HIV/AIDS

U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher and the Congressional Black Caucus joined some of Gospel music's well known artists to announce ONE VOICE: Gospel Artists Respond To AIDS campaign, the gospel artists' call to action to address the horrendous problem of AIDS in the African American and Africa communities. Other organizations involved include: The Black Leadership Comission on AIDS, The Balm In Gilead, The Magic Johnson Foundation, Community Life Support Systems. Cothran Publications, Inc. will distribute its Healthy Living Pocket Guide during each concert date.

These organizations have joined with many of Gospel's well known leaders and artists such as Dr. Bobby Jones, Edwin Hawkins, Kirk Franklin, Walter Hawkins, Richard Smallwood, Al "The Bishop" Hobbs, Vickie Winans, Andre Crouch and Sandra Crouch. The campaign is organized by the Rev. Yvette Flunder, Executive Director, Ark of Refuge.

Top-Dr. Bobby Jones, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Congresswoman Donna Christian-Christansen and others join U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher to launch the One Voice National Campaign. Bottom-Gospel composer, Richard Smallwood, directs the One Voice recording session at Omega Recording Studio in Rockville, MD.

The ONE VOICE Campaign will include a series of concerts in three major cities in 2001. The first concert is scheduled for March 2, 2001, in Chicago. Participating artists will perform at these concerts, which will serve as vehicles to provide AIDS education and encourage African Americans to get tested for HIV. Concert organizers will work in partnership with local HIV/AIDS service organizations in each city.

The campaign is also supported by the Gospel Music Workshop of America and the Gospel Announcers Guild who will engage Gospel radio hosts to further involve and educate their listening audiences about HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

According to the Centers For Disease Control, from July 1999

Kings of Gospel

ROY LEWIS

l-r, One Voice CD Producer, Donald Lawrence, composer and recording artist Richard Smallwood, the legendary fathers of contemporary gospel music, Walter Hawkins and Edwin Hawkins enjoy a light moment after attending a health symposium at the office of the Surgeon General in Rockville, MD.

through June 2000, 48% of reported AIDS cases were among Black adults and adolescents. And, of the estimated 40,000 new HIV infections each year, greater than 50% occur among African Americans. "We are at a critical point in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the African American community. With an estimated 1 in 50 Black men and 1 in 160 Black women living with HIV, the time to act is now! We must get HIV positive individuals into care and work harder to prevent the further spread of this disease," said Dr. Eric Goosby, Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Policy.

Twisted Tongues Tour

LORI EANES

Rainbow Flava

The upcoming documentary, "TWISTED TONGUES", a companion piece to the late Marlon Riggs' Emmy Award winning documentary "TONGUES UNTIED," will feature the TWISTED TOUR, bringing together openly Bi/Gay HipHop/R&B recording artists. For each city the tour visits, the documentary will profile a member of the local community. The goal is to give viewers a glance into the everyday lives of minority bisexual and gay men. The profile will combine in depth conversations with "day in the life" film footage. The Soundtrack will feature many openly Bi/Gay hip-hop artists including San Francisco based Rainbow Flava; lesbian rapper Cyryus, former Prince DJ turned hip-hop artist Tori Fixx, and Karter louis. "TWISTED TONGUES" the soundtrack will be released in April of 2001. The TWISTED TOUR kicks off in May 2001 to coincide with many Black Pride events across the country (check venusmagazine.com for schedule updates). The tour will play in gay clubs with predominantly mixed or minority clientele. The goal is to get AIDS prevention information to a traditionally difficult to reach community, minority bisexual/gay and non-affirming men who sleep with men. For more information call 212-946-5215 or email: triangle_entertainment@yahoo.com.

STEWART VAN DEZEE

Rev. Kennedy

THE GAYEST GREAT-GRAND MOTHER IN TOWN

She reminds me of that character, Auntie Mame, with her joie-de-vivre and the exciting tales she could tell from her many life experiences. Reverend Kennedy collected me at a train station in Harlem and whisked me away to "somewhere we can talk quietly." She was recognized and greeted warmly by the proprietor of Amy Ruth's restaurant where we were ushered to a table in the middle of the dining area. "They have the best tomato herb soup," she said, wide-eyed with anticipation. Her bright eyes are dimmed, temporarily, after we're told by our waiter that there was none left. She quickly chose a substitute without studying the menu for too long. After we'd ordered she began to regale me with her story . . . well, a short version of it.

Born, September 22, 1938, in Albany, NY Rev. Kennedy knew early on that she was a lesbian. And so did everyone else in her small home town.

"My family married me off at age fourteen because I was the talk of the town. Saratoga Springs being a small town, and I was chasing the girls around town, and my parents were, like, not having it. My family sent for someone from the islands to marry me but I rebelled by running away and finding someone that I was, at least, familiar with to marry. I had no choice, the idea was to 'straighten' me out. I had one of the biggest weddings in town."

As a child Kennedy never thought she was doing anything wrong when at ten years old her mother caught her playing doctor with girls. "Well, that's innocent enough, lots of kids play doctor but not the way way I was playing it."

The husband of the child-bride was a thirty year old minister of a religion called Fire Baptised Holiness Pentecostal. Kennedy thought she'd at least be safe and comforable outside the security of her parent's home. "It sounded ideal to me and I thought that would get me off the hook, as far as sexual relations are concerned."

She thought wrong. After a year of violent attacks toward the now fifteen year old child, Kennedy's mother stepped in and had the marriage annuled.

"In retrospect, he was mentally ill and a religious fanatic, we didn't know about that back in those days. Now, we've got the terms. He said that I was part of the cleansing process."

What was the cleansing process? I asked. Rev. Kennedy pauses or seems not to hear me. What cleansing process? I repeat.

"He said that God sent him to cleanse the earth and because I was a very sinful person, to hear him tell it, I was part of the cleansing process. Again, because of the religion, I thought that I could tell him who I really was but that set him off."

Our meals arrive and Rev. Kennedy reaches into her purse and

pulls out her own bottle of special Jamacian hot sauce to sprinkle on her fried chicken. "I moved back home with my family while pregnant with my first son, still under eighteen and still under parental rule. My mother told me 'just because that marriage didn't work don't mean that you should give up."

She did marry again at seventeen years old to an enlisted army man who was on the verge of being discharged because he was suspected of being gay. "Our marriage put an end to that." Five children later and after the failure of her second marriage Rev. Kennedy decided to pursue a career in show business as a comedienne.

"I always liked to make people laugh." She moved her family to Boston and performed for several years, mostly in Canada. It was during the showbiz career that she got her "calling" to the ministry.

During a performance in Canada in 1966, while onstage, Kennedy had a spiritual awakening. "I heard someone calling my name when I was alone in my dressing room. I was drenched, like someone had poured water all over me. I know now that it was the spirit. It was calling my name and saying 'I have work for you to do.' This happened three times; it was a humbling experience." She returned to her parent's home in Saratoga and fasted for three days, shutting herself off from family and friends and was in constant prayer.

"Because of the biblical stories like where Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of homosexuality and God called on me to preach, I was really testing. I was like, Lord, if you want me to do this, you really have to give me some kind of sign. I wanted confirmation. During my prayers I was shown a vision of the whole gay community at that time and was told that these were my children. I said that if I am going to do this then I'm going to need a way."

"I was running from the calling, you know. I really didn't want to do this. I was not yet reconciled to the calling."

It was when Martin Luther King was assassinated, during a road trip to Atlanta, that she reconciled herself to that higher calling. Due to the racial unrest they were advised to drive the back roads, and not to use the highways "We'd gotten lost. I saw this great big sign saying 'This is Klan Country' with a black wooden figure hanging from its neck on the billboard. We froze. I said 'Lord, if you get me back to Boston alive, I will serve you all the days of my life."

The calling hadn't been easy for Reverend Kennedy being a woman, a minister and refusing to hide the fact that she is a lesbian.

"As in most churches, it was all right, as long as you're quiet about it. I had been out of the closet and because I was in the ministry I was not going to enter the closet because of the church."

"Then in nineteen sixty-nine, Stonewall happened," she says enthusiastically.

She had been vacationing in Provincetown with a girlfriend-when the couple overheard on the radio that the "faggots and bulldaggers were fighting in Greenwich Village." Kennedy, her date and others from New York City immediately packed up and drove back. It was day-break when they reached the Village to join the fray.

"They were fighting the cops in the streets and every time more police reinforcement came, more fighters came. When reinforcement was brought in from New Jersey, people came from New Jersey to help fight! It was something to see."

Kennedy recalls that in the days prior to the riot, the police raided gay bars and harassed gay people. There was a code that bars used to let clients know when the police were coming. A brief flicker of the lights would immediately cause a break-up of same-sex dancing and pair off heterosexual couplings at tables. The police would arrest men or drag queens who were not wearing at least three items of male underwear or clothing. The women would be arrested if they wore more male than female clothing items.

"My family married me off at age fourteen because I was the talk of the town. Saratoga Springs being a small town, and I was chasing the girls around town. My family sent for someone from the islands to marry me. The idea was to 'straighten' me out.

"On one very sad and rainy day-the day of Judy Garland's funeral in NYC-the faggots and bulldaggers stood up for themselves."

"Even in those days I've always had a very deep religious conviction and I never believed that God did not love me and just because I was gay that I couldn't be a part of God's kingdom."

_S. Van de Zee

Making History and Renewing Our Promise

The Mautner Project's Healing Works Conference and 10th Anniversary Gala Sept, 2000, was the inaugral National Conference on Lesbians and Cancer. The event was groundbreaking and a resounding success. Healing Works brought together more than 300 participants and was immediately followed by their 10th Annual Gala, complete with dinner, dancing and reflective celebration of the Mautner Project's 10 years of Lesbians and Cancer awareness.

1. Assistant Surgeon General, Dr. Marilyn Gaston opens the conference with her stirring keynote address. 2. Denise Hyater and Chris Harper add to the evening's glamour. 3. Cheryl Fields, the Mautner Project's Health Promotion & Education Director (r) and her partner Denise Pearson.
4. Byllye Avery, founder of the National Black Women's Health Project.
5. Senior Health Activists Eunice Samuels and Rosalie Banks. 6. Keynote speaker and Mautner Project client Kelly Marbury. 7. Assistant Surgeon General Dr. Marilyn Gaston, with her daughter, Ami. 8. Abena Gyerewaa performs a traditonal blessing. *Photography by Lanna R. Lawrence*

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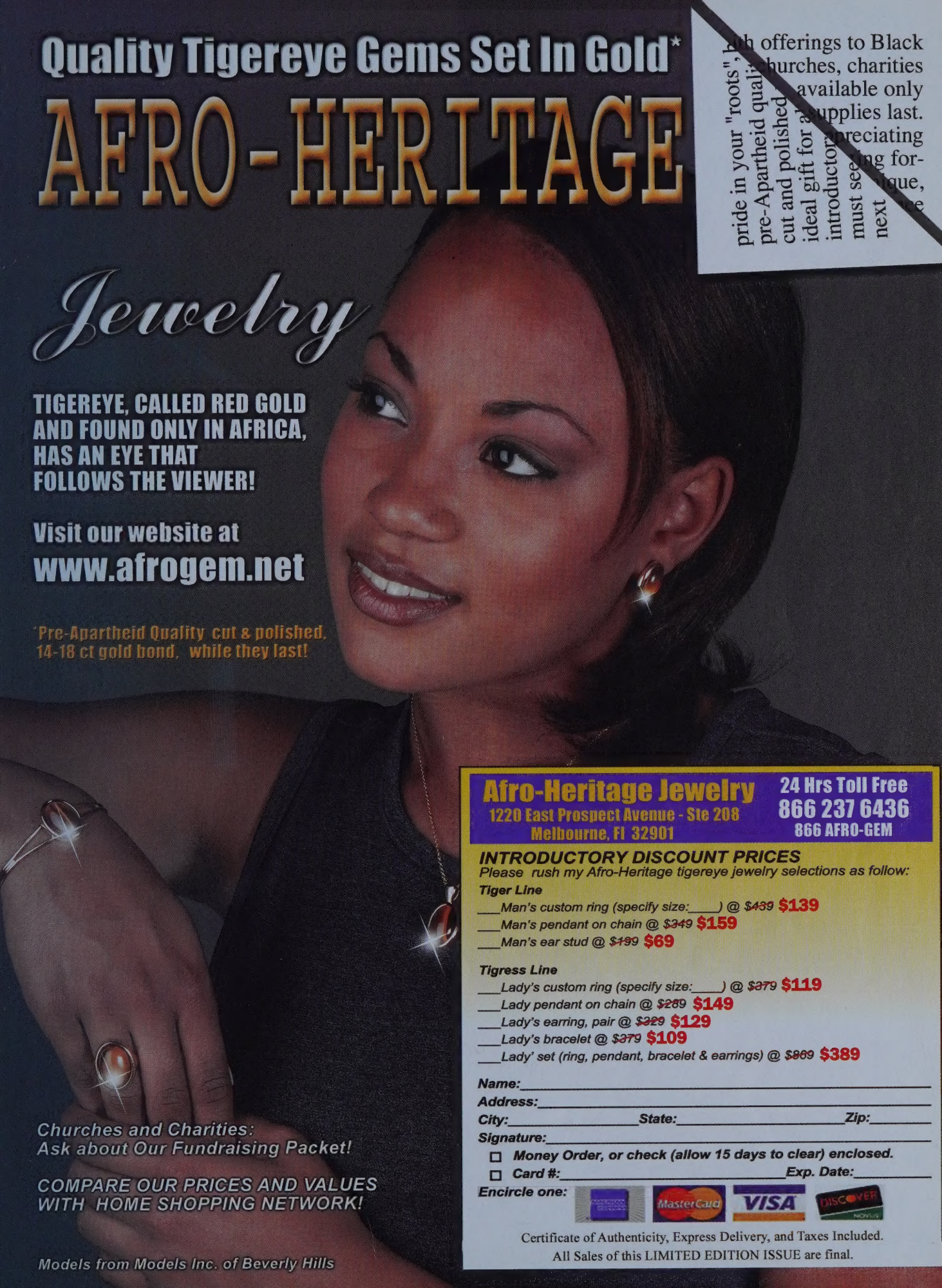

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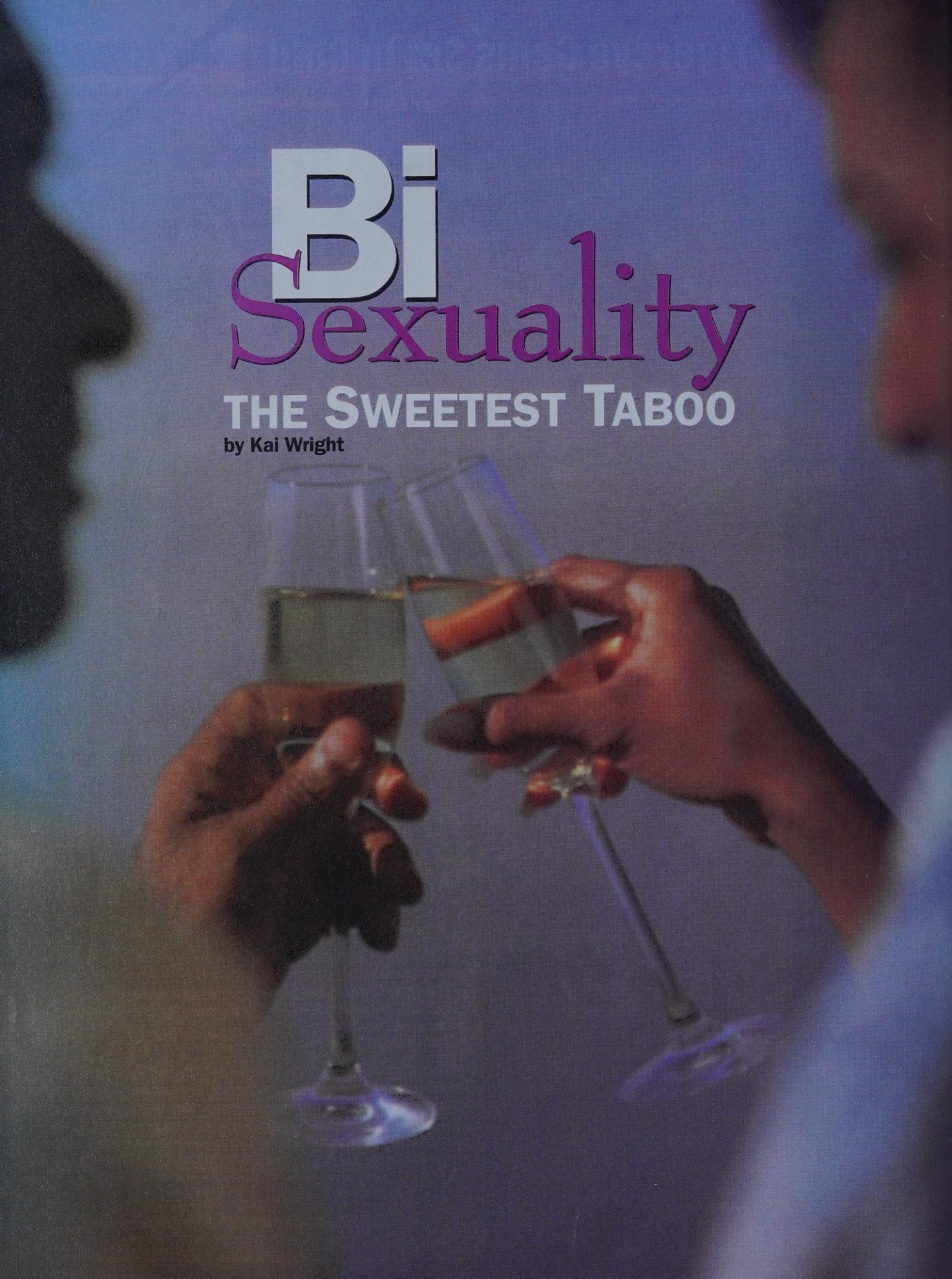


Bi Sexuality

THE SWEETEST TABOO

by Kai Wright

Eliyahou (Elias) Farajaje was an out, proud black gay man – had been since he was 16 years old. But one day he looked up and found himself in a long-term relationship with a woman. That woman was an equally out, proud black lesbian. In fact, gay activism was one of the passions they shared.

> "I found out all of these kind of queer boundaries that I struggled to maintain just weren't there. There's a lot more of us out there than people are wanting to acknowledge."

For a while – certain no one would understand, and not entirely sure they got it themselves – the pair hid their relationship from friends and colleagues. But, ultimately, they both decided to come out as "gay-identified bisexuals." To many people, gay or straight, that would probably just make things more confusing. But Farajaje argues many of those who would be confused by it have lived, or are living, his same reality; they just aren't willing to embrace it.

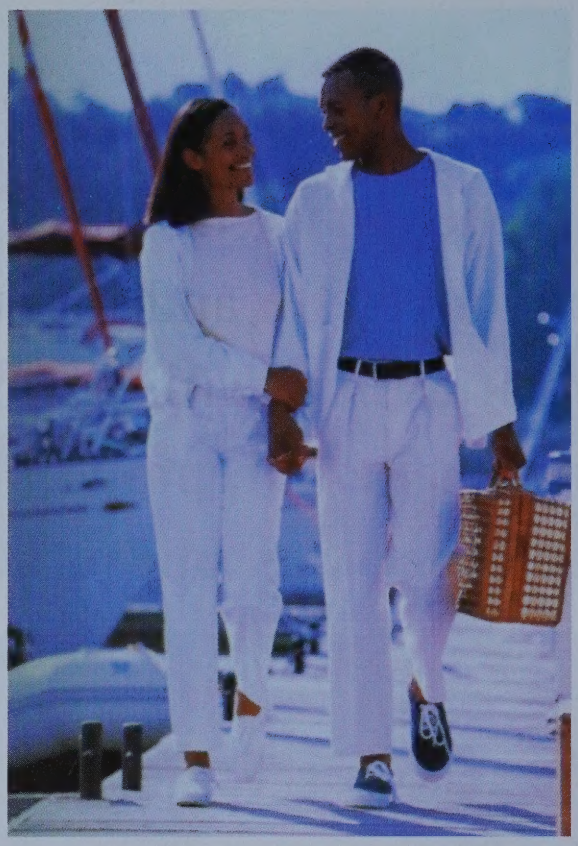
"When I came out, everybody kind of gave me their closet bi story," says Farajaje, a professor of cultural studies at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. "I found out all of these kind of queer boundaries that I struggled to maintain just weren't there. There's a lot more of us out there than people are wanting to acknowledge."

But, as Farajaje and other bisexual-identified activists concede, that assertion begs the question of who is "us"? What does it mean to be bisexual and black? It's a question for which there appears to be no universally accepted answer. Nevertheless, most people have strong preconceptions about bisexuality in a black context. For some in the black gay community, to be bisexual is to be closeted. For many in the larger black community, it summons images of everything from exotic women to dangerously deceptive boyfriends and husbands. And for many in both, it's just a gentler way of saying homosexual.

"People use the word bisexual in a lot of different ways. So it's created all of this sort of negativity around the term," Farajaje sighs. "It's so heavily charged."

Shanté T. Smalls says she's experienced those preconceptions most profoundly within the gay community rather than among straight people. Smalls, who identifies as bisexual, is dating another bisexual woman now. For the most part, people have no problem with their relationship. As long as she's dating a woman, she says, people don't care what she identifies herself as.

But a year ago she was in a relationship with a bisexual man. And, although she is a gay activist, and worked at New York City's Lesbian and Gay Community Center at the time, the reception the couple received within the community was icy at best.



"The only way I can put it is we got a lot of shit," complains Smalls, who now works on people of color issues for Amnesty International's LGBT project. "People were saying, 'You're bringing your heterosexual energy to this.' I felt like I was being policed."

Suddenly, people couldn't understand what it meant for her to be bisexual and dating a man. Didn't she want to sleep with women still? "I would say, 'Well, we're having a monogamous relationship. What does that mean for you?'"

Kevin McGruder, director of New York City's Gay Men of African Descent, says the confusion about and reluctance to embrace bisexual people, particularly among black gay men, stems largely from a popular confluence of bisexuals with men who are married or otherwise straight-identified but dating men "on the down low." He said his group has had trouble reaching out to bisexual black men because of this confusion.

"We don't really give ourselves an opportunity to explore sexuality. We just take on what's assigned to us."

"We've been so sexualized as a people that we don't feel comfortable articulating sexuality."

"That's a real challenge, because in the gay community some people resent bisexual people," McGruder explains, adding that bisexuals are seen as would-be gays who are clinging to heterosexual privilege. "They're considered just closeted, or they're trying to perpetrate."

Smalls says she has seen much of the same attitude among women. She recalled several occasions when she met a woman who she considered dating, but who rejected her after discovering she is bisexual. Those women, Smalls explains, previously had negative experiences dating women who were simultaneously involved with men as well. "I tell them, you need to think about who you get involved with, not how they identify themselves," she says. "You're choosing to be involved with someone who is already involved."

The alienation of bisexual people has deepened in recent years. Men who operate "on the down low" have been increasingly demonized in both the gay and straight black community as public health officials have determined them to be a high risk group for contracting HIV – and for subsequently infecting both their male and female sexual partners.

But McGruder and Farajaje agree that many of these closeted men, whether they be potentially gay or potentially bisexual, are provided too many compelling reasons by the gay community to remain in hiding. McGruder argues that the black gay community needs to do more to create an environment of support for people questioning their sexual identity.

"If we are criticizing men who are married and dealing with men, what are we offering?" he asks. "We have to acknowledge that we have work to do in terms of creating an environment where people feel they can grow, be in supportive relationships and be supported by their community."

Moreover, he adds, those who have in fact come to consider themselves bisexual are similarly encouraged to maintain a straight public persona. "I think people are ambivalent about identifying themselves in that way because they get criticism from gay and lesbian people and from heterosexual people."

Which is why, Farajaje hastens to point out, just as many bisexual people live in gay closets, as he once did. "There's an erasure of bisexual people that goes on," he says. "A lot of people will go to events and simply pass as lesbian or gay."

And, he adds, the notion that

he is clinging to heterosexual privilege is ridiculous given the way the black community understands bisexuality. He argues that bi people are either dismissed as gay or looked upon as deceptive and promiscuous. Smalls notes that when she came out as bisexual to her parents, they told her they would prefer she be gay. "They think that it means I'm a slut," she explains.

Both believe the real issue is deeper than any given sexual identity. Rather, they say, the gay and straight black community's difficulty understanding and accepting

bisexual people is part of the community's larger trouble with having active discussions about sexuality.

"We don't really give ourselves an opportunity to explore sexuality. We just take on what's assigned to us," Smalls argues, pointing to the hyper-masculine aesthetic of the black male. "We've been so sexualized as a people that we don't feel comfortable articulating sexuality."

But many black lesbians and gay people feel that is exactly why it's important for them to develop explicitly gay identities and challenge the larger community to consider their worth. Weaving in a bisexual identity only complicates the matter. And, some argue, it is ultimately up to bisexual people to similarly develop and vocalize their own explicit identity.

A number of black gay male activists have recently been meeting to come up with a national strategy and vehicle for articulating such a gay male identity within the black community, and thereby drawing attention to the challenges and issues they face. Earl Fowlkes, a lead organizer of Washington, D.C.'s Black Pride festival, is among that group. He says the group discussed whether to include advocacy for bisexual men or "men who have sex with men" – as public health officials have termed men who identify as straight but still engage in sex with other men.

"We made a specific decision to continue to go as a gay black consortium," Fowlkes says. "Black gay men don't have a voice, so I can certainly appreciate the disillusionment the bisexual community feels. But part of that is they have to put their issues up front."

In her work for Amnesty International's OutFront program, where she assesses activism gaps Amnesty can fill in gay communities of color, Smalls has been looking for an outlet to build just this sort of bisexual advocacy and visibility. She's found little so far. However, she notes, her office hopes to eventually ally with organizations such as the National Latino/a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization, which is actively involved in bi-advocacy, and Bi-Network, which is cultivating a people of color caucus.

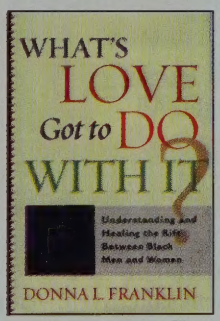
But on a more personal level, she stresses, both gay and straight black people are going to have to learn that there's more to the world of sexuality than they're willing to understand today. And until they become accepting of that idea, there's always going to be tension.

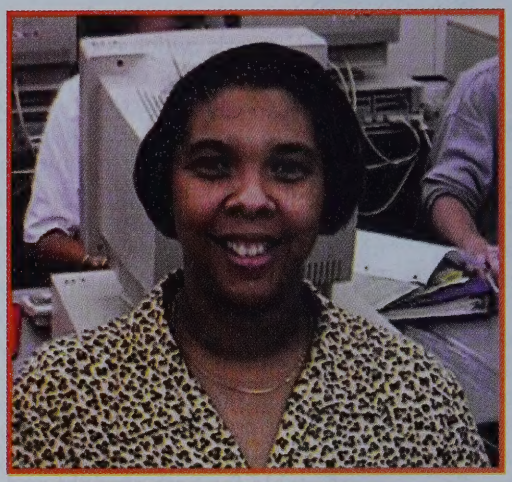
"If I'm with a man the rest of my life," she lectures, "I'm still going to be bisexual. If I'm with a woman the rest of my life, I'm still going to be bisexual. It's very uncomfortable for both straight and gay people to hear that."

What's Love Got to Do With It?

Understanding and Healing the Rift Between Black Men and Women by Donna L. Franklin, Simon & Schuster, 2000 ISBN 0-684-81851-5

What's Love Got to Do With It? moves beyond simplistic analyses that would suggest that black men need to get on their feet and black women need to be more pliant and deferential to their mates. Instead Franklin argues that African-American couples today are still living out a dysfunctional story that has its roots in slavery. Franklin emphasizes the interplay of social, ecomonic, and cultural factors in black gender relations. Weaving together historical texts with the writings of contemporary authors, factual analysis, and the most recent statistical findings, the book provides the catalyst for honest dialogue.





Bi Like Me

When Denise Pruitt-Pope, a bisexual counselor and outreach worker, attended a Boston Femme/Butch party, she was pretty sure that all the black women there were gay. But after spending time interviewing groups of sistahs, she found that most of them were actually bisexual. Pruitt-Pope says that of the 99% of black women she encounters who say they are gay, 85% are actually bisexuals.

"I talked to at least 62 black women that night. All of them initially identified as lesbian, but by the end of the conversation 58 of them said, 'Well, yeah, O.K. I guess I am Bisexual!"

Pruitt-Pope usually begins by asking women about their previous relationships. Some are recently divorced from men and some admit having had a recent boyfriend or a fling with a man. Usually these incidents are not isolated. "Most gay women I've talked to have had at least an attraction to a guy."

The most common misconception about bisexuality is that a person is having sex with both men and woman at the same time. Although this is true for some, it is not the only way, nor is it the most common way to define bisexuality. Pruitt-Pope says that most black gay women identify as being gay when they with a woman and I.D. as straight when they are with a man, but rarely consider themselves bisexual.

"The stigma attached to 'going both ways' in the gay community shys both men and women away from embracing themselves fully."

Blacks who have NOT come out of the closet are more likely to embrace an identity of bisexuality. "Everyone in my family suspects that I'm gay but nobody knows for sure," say an anonymous woman. "I'm attracted to men too. I date men, but most of all it keeps my people guessing. Do I consider my self as bisexual ? No! I'm just being myself."

When asked to define the basis for her own bisexuality, the 40 year old Pruitt-Pope who was raised in an upper-middle-class black Boston family, recalls being attracted to girls in her teenaged years, but had never had a gay encounter. When she and her boyfriend "HAD to get married" because of an unexpected pregnancy, Pruitt-Pope put her curiosity on ice.

"Later, I finally gathered the courage to tell my husband about my attraction to woman and said to him 'you can divorce me or you can learn to deal it.' "

"Later, I finally gathered the courage to tell my husband about my attraction to women and said to him 'You can divorce me or you can learn to deal with it.' "

Pruitt-Pope says her marriage is wonderful and that both she and her husband enjoy a great relationship; so good that they recently renewed their wedding vows. "I think the openness makes the marriage stronger. He doesn't see it. I'm very discreet and I never sacrifice our time. He gets the same quality time as always."

Pruitt-Pope suspects that her situation is very common. "The woman I now see is also married. Her husband knows about me but we have never met. We don't even want to meet."

Are YOU Really Bi?

According to Lani Ka'ahumanu, author of Bi Any Other Name: Bisexuals Speak Out, bisexuality is the capacity for emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction to more than one gender/sex. A person who self identifies as bisexual affirms this complexity and acknowledges a reality beyond the either/or dualities of heterosexism.

Take the Venus Sexuality Quiz by answering the questions below, then add up your points.

1. Are you a woman with an attraction to other women?
   Yes ☐ 0 No ☐ 0
2. Are you a man with an attraction to other men?
   Yes ☐ 0 No ☐ 0
3. Are you in a romantic relationship with a person of the same sex, but have sexual fantasies about the opposite sex?
   Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 1
4. Are you attracted to both men and women? Yes ☐ 4 No ☐ 0
5. Are you in a relationship with a person of the opposite sex, but fantasize about same sex encounters?
   Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 0
6. Has it been less than three years since your last sexual encounter with a person of the opposite sex?
   Yes ☐ 3 No ☐ 1
7. Have you ever had an attraction to a person of the opposite sex?
   Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 0
8. Have you ever dated a person of the opposite sex in between romantic gay relationships?
   Yes ☐ 4 No ☐ 0

Answers:

0 - 3 points – It's safe to say you're probably not bisexual.

4 - 7 points – You may not be Bi but you're mighty damn curious about it.

8 - 11 points – You knew all along you were Bi but didn't want to admit it to yourself. Get over it, child! Variety IS the spice of life. Don't fret. Most of your 'gay' friends are too!

12 - 15 points – You're definitely bisexual and probably embrace the identity out and proud. Infact, you have no problem what so ever letting him know about her or her know about him.

Bi Organizations

Bisexual People of Color
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. includes D.C., Maryland, and Virginia

BiPoC,B
Bisexual People of Color of Boston
617-424-9595,
en espanol 617.277-2017
em: brctina@shore.net

Bisexual Married Women's
Support Group Boston area
617.731.9060
em: starfurry@worldnet.att.net

Bisexual and Gay Married Men's
Support Group Boston area
617.625.0330

Websites about Bisexuality

www.biresource.org
www.bisexual.org
www.bi.org
www.bicafe.com
www.binetusa.org
www.bndc.org-BiNetwork DC
www.BE.org - BiEthnic Ezine for Women of Color.
www.ZAMI.org - Lesbian, bisexual, and questioning African-American women

Books & Magazines

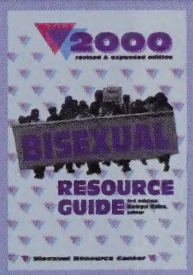
Anything Goes
www.anythingthatmoves.com

Bisexual Resource Guide,
4th Edition
Robyn Ochs, Boston Resource Center, 2000

Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life
Marjoie Garber, 1995

Bi Any Other Name: Bisexuals Speak Out
Loraine Hutchins and Lani Ka' ahumanu, 1991

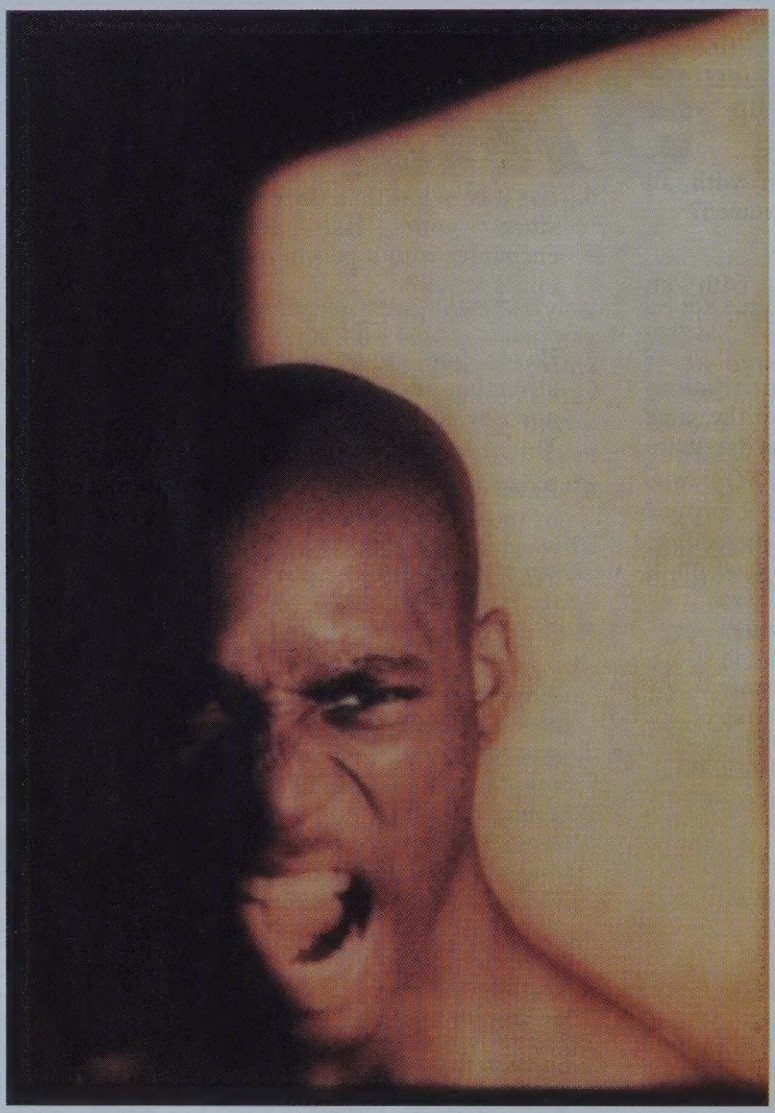
The Bi Guide



The Bisexual Resource Guide edited by Robyn Ochs and Boston's Bisexual resource Center contains over 300 pages of updates listings, articles, tips on how to start your own bisexual support group, a section on notable films with bisexual characters, an excellent bibliography and bi resources on the internet. Over 49 countries are represented. To order send $12.95 to Bisexual Resource Center, Dept. BRC, P. O. Box 400639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or call 617.424.9595 or visit www.biresource.org.

Chameleon: Variation of a Homo-Thug

By Phillip J. Ammonds



Rashawn is an every day kat. You know, the kind that you find on the avenue kickin' it with his boys and tryin' to get the digits from the honeys? He is soaked in the latest urban gear and his du-rag shields his waves from the elements. His goatee and mustache are sharp, almost as if he sketched them in with a pencil. Like his fellow thugs, he walks with a dip and grabs at his crotch, suggesting that he is packing more than a nine. Rashawn is fine and he has a baby's mother to prove it. He is a thug in every way and sports an attitude to back up what he represents.

This Saturday evening, he is doing the usual chillin' with the boys until it is time for him to bounce. After partaking in his tribal ritual of puffing an el and sharing a bottle of Hennie with his friends, he bids them farewell and makes his weekly pilgrimage uptown. His destination is a dark, dank hole in the wall some where up in the Bronx and the cost of admission is $12. Upon entering, his body is caught in a rapture of hip hop tunes and cigarette smoke. Rashawn makes his way to the bar that is pressed up against the back wall next to the DJ booth. Along the way he pays homage to a couple of heads that he recognizes from previous Saturday nights. Some of them, he would even consider friends. Once he gets his drink, he busies himself in idle chatter with people standing near the bar and watches a couple get their "make out" on in the corner. A wide smile spreads across his face as he sways to the tunes because he knows that he will also be doing his thing later on that

night. He is in his own world. There are no baby's mothers and none of his boys from around the way are present this evening. Even if it's just for a couple of hours, he is happy to be in this safe haven where men can be in the intimate company of other men.

The fictional Rashawn lives the life of so many young men of color in today's society. Ellen Degeneris' and Anne Heche's public relationship may have been liberating for the gay yuppies of America; however, it did very little to lessen the cultural and societal shackles that confine young urbanites, A.K.A. homo-thugs, to a dual existence.

Bisexual? Maybe. Perpetrators? Possibly. Trying to survive? Absolutely. A young man that is growing up in an environment where masculinity is defined by how many women you screw and whether or not your hustle is on point, cannot afford to acknowledge his feelings for the same sex. He would be considered weak, a "pussy" if you will, and his image that he has tried so hard to build would be shattered. So, what does he do?

Well, he shields himself with multiple female admirers. He may even make one his wifey and exercise the right to procreate. Sometimes, he adopts the homophobic attitudes of his straight cohorts. Slowly but surely, instincts kick in and this new species of man will learn how to change the color of his hyde and camouflage himself from the prying eyes of his community. When he has the opportunity, he will steal moments and seek out places where he can meet other men like himself. He will find stomping grounds, in remote areas, where he can hang with other straightactingnonfaggotmanloving men. He will have his cake and eat it, too.

"He is in his own world. There are no baby's mothers and none of his boys from around the way are present this evening. Even if it's just for a couple of hours, he is happy to be in this safe haven where men can be in the intimate company of other men."

"A young man that is growing up in an environment where masculinity is defined by how many women you screw and whether or not your hustle is on point, cannot afford to acknowledge his feelings for the same sex. He would be considered weak, a pussy."

One can only hope that this homo-thug finds peace in his duality. In an ideal world, he can exist as a "roughneck" that likes other men. There would be no expectations placed on his manhood. He would be able to embrace his sexuality and masculinity in one hug. He could be just as banjee as he wanted to be, but be truthful to his spirit and heart at the same time. It really doesn't matter if he loves men and women, or just men. What matters is that his soul isn't consumed by self-hatred and internalized homophobia.

Many drinks later and after a night of sodomy and delight, Rashawn enters the apartment he shares with his girl. Saturday night has now turned into Sunday afternoon and she will have many questions. "Where have you been?" "Who have you been with?" Every Sunday he weaves a different web that keeps him safe. This time, she just hands him the baby and heads out the door in a huff. He doesn't even ask her where she is going. He just kisses his son and settles in front of the television. All will be good by tomorrow and Rashawn will do it again next week.

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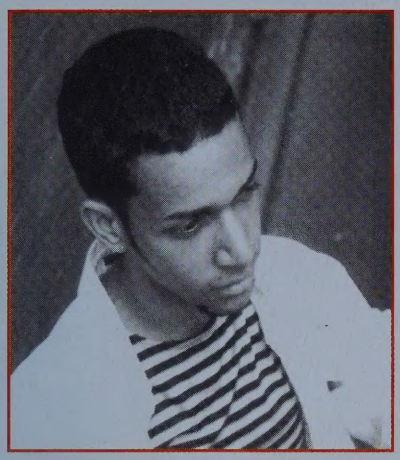


Shopping for Strange Fruit

by Eugenio A. Diaz

Walking past the staring housewives at the corner fruit store, I think to myself: "It ain't easy being green." Most people don't know where to place me, thanks to my perfectly mixed heritage, golden brown skin and a distinctive sense of style. I have to push through the small but determined crowd of housewives--who having long since become inured to the sight of my bleach blond hair, nose ring and ravishing taste in fashion--to go three rounds for that last nashi. "No matter," I say, "it shall be mine!" And so I weave to the left, fake to the right, kneecap the old woman with the walker (she was in my way!), and I have the last perfect specimen just in time to catch my train to Shibuya.

A nashi, if you are wondering, is a fantastic Frankenstein's monster of a fruit, with the look and texture of an apple combined with the sweet and mellow flavor of a pear. A strange fruit, as it were, so you can imagine the depths of my affection for it (not to say resemblance to it). It is also a fruit which, for me, symbolizes the place I've called home for the past 2 years--Japan, land of contradictions.

A nashi can not be judged on face value and neither can that cute Japanese boy you think might be smiling at you. Things here are simply not as they seem. For instance, walking off the plane in February of '99, I remember being dumbstruck by the sight of a room full of people, the majority of whom were wearing surgical face masks! I thought that maybe the plague had hit. I'm talking about a fourth horseman of the Apocalypse type of thing. I flipped (I can't die just when being Latino is in! What did Christina Aguilera struggle for?). It turns out that the people with the masks had simple colds and were courteous enough to wear a mask for the health of those around them. How's that for polite and strange?

To a foreigner, Japan can be a most intriguing mix of new and old, modern and traditional, East and West, and just plain weird; unlike any other place they have been. And it can also be dauntingly inaccessible. I mean lets face it, as homosexuals we are a people of symbols and body language; we are experts of the unspoken truth. Case in point, if you see a boy checking his perfectly arched eyebrows in his compact which he keeps in his Louis Vuitton while riding the 4 train downtown, chances are he's got a little sugar in his shoes. Not so here, as a matter of fact I've seen 50 year old men whose heterosexuality is beyond conjecture walking down the street, arms linked, wrapped in conversation. So, what do you do when the symbols change and you want to hook up? Don't worry boys, I'm here to help!

That smile don't mean a thing! Japanese culture values polite social interactions almost above anything else. So a smile can mean anything from "please I would like to marry you this instant" to "I can't believe you actually think you can talk to me." We've all encountered this kind of phony bullshit before, but you have to remember

"We are a people of symbols and body language; we are experts of the unspoken truth. If you see a boy checking his perfectly arched eyebrows in his compact, which he keeps in his Louis Vuitton while riding the 4 train downtown, chances are he's got a little sugar in his shoes."

continued on page 54

Tribal Affair

Photography by De Alan Wilson
Exclusively for Venus
www.dealanphoto.com

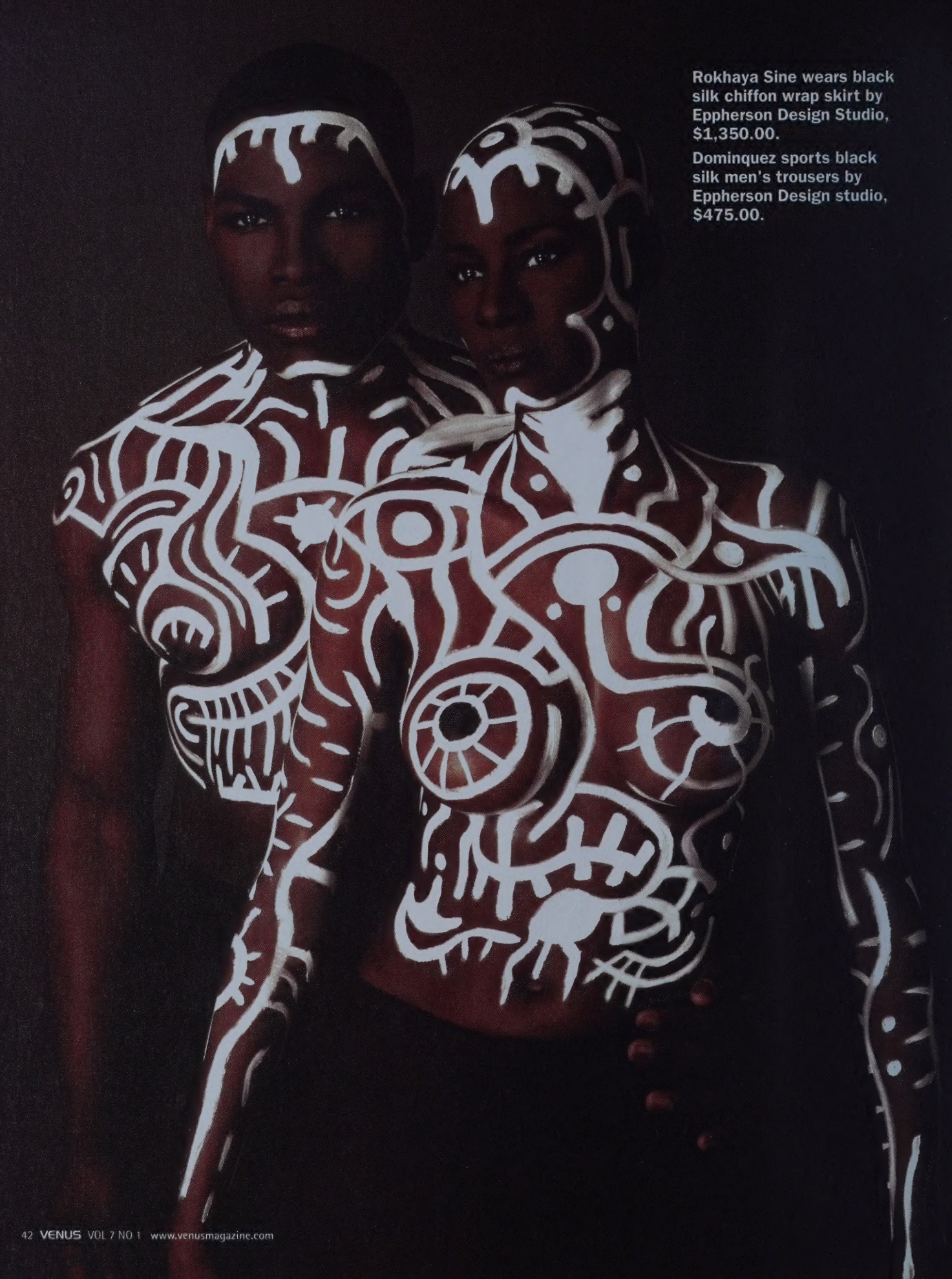
Body Painting by Billy,
Exclusively for Venus
www.billyart.com

Hair & Makeup
Byron Barnes

Styling
Quinlan Duriod

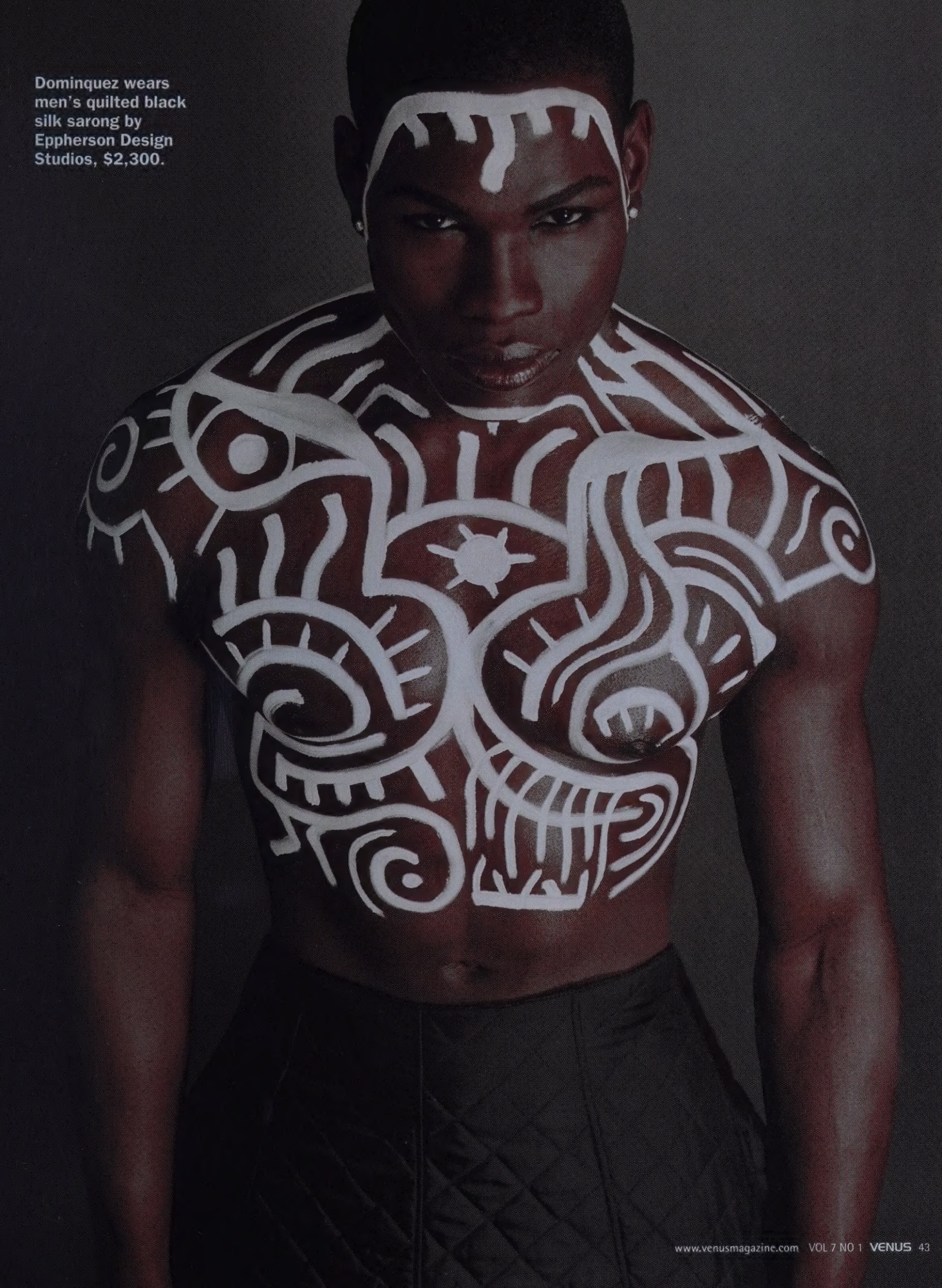
Models
Dominquez and
Rokhaya Sine

Wardrobe
Eppherson Studios



Rokhaya Sine wears black silk chiffon wrap skirt by Eppherson Design Studio, $1,350.00.

Dominquez sports black silk men's trousers by Eppherson Design studio, $475.00.



Dominquez wears men's quilted black silk sarong by Eppherson Design Studios, $2,300.

Tribal Affair

Body Language at its Best

The contours of the body make a perfect 3 dimensional canvas. It gives momentum and life to an artists' creation. Billy, the self-taught artist of recent acclaim, is sure of this. "I had never painted bodies before" he says of his collaboration with photographer DeAlan Wilson. He met the models and unleashed a sensual and provocative landscape with his paint brush in one night. There is a first time for everything. And this time it was fierce.

Wilson's lenses capture the subtle and evocative exuberance of fearlessness. The collaboration between artist and photographer produced a series of breathtaking and elegant portraits. Having complete freedom over his input allowed Billy to manifest himself in new ways. The ritual

turing the atmosphere of the East Village. The show's producers were so pleased with the work that they asked him to design Rent T-shirts and to recreate the murals for the London and national touring companies of the production.

It wasn't long before he had a show at the Ozone Art Gallery in SoHo, New York. The show featured a collection of 52 portraits. The faces of Billy's friends and of "Rent" cast members, are done in his urban primitive style. The vivid colors and the flat, crude images are reminiscent of Edvard Munch. His contribution to Venus is more like Keith Harring's graffiti

"This labor of beauty is an alternative accessory for the body"

of painting bodies have greater meaning in some cultures where it symbolizes a passage into adulthood. This labor of beauty is an alternative accessory for the body. Recently henna tattoos were the rage for hip bohemians, most notably Erykah Badu. But for Billy, who defines his style as urban primitive, this primordial stream of consciousness epitomizes the essence of our roots.

Billy has been an artist and performer since the age of 8. He moved to New York with a modest $250 after graduating from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music. As a neophyte in the city of cut-throat ambition, Billy experienced success in Broadway national tours and workshops. It wasn't until his next door neighbor, an artist and art director, saw the murals he had painted, ran back to her studio to fetch him blank canvases and supplies that he began to take painting seriously.

Soon, Billy took his art to the streets finding anyone or place to hang it. After a year he had twenty restaurants, bars and cafes that had showcased his work. His break came when Kevin McCollum took him to see the workshop of a new show McCollum was thinking of producing. It was about East Village artists like Billy, long on dreams but lacking the finances to make it happen; it was "Rent." When McColum, his co-producers and designer, Paul Clay took "Rent" to Broadway, they took Billy with them commissioning him to paint 9 x 6 square ceiling murals cap-

inspired art of the 80's. Billy's oeuvre include a 100 foot mural for New York's Tunnel nightclub, Star Bucks and the Argentinian sensation, De La Guarda. As the Washington and New York Post exclaimed the artist with one name and two earrings "has finally been discovered."

Billy's recognition is a result of his charismatic demeanor and love of art. His favorite projects includes re-creating Woodstock's 'Peace Wall' (1999) and creating a set for music maverick George Clinton and the P Funk All Stars. His success in the last few years have been unprecedented. Billy's passion for life and living comes across in his art and his voice. For him Tribal Affair was an "inspiring and exciting" endeavor.

De Alan Wilson

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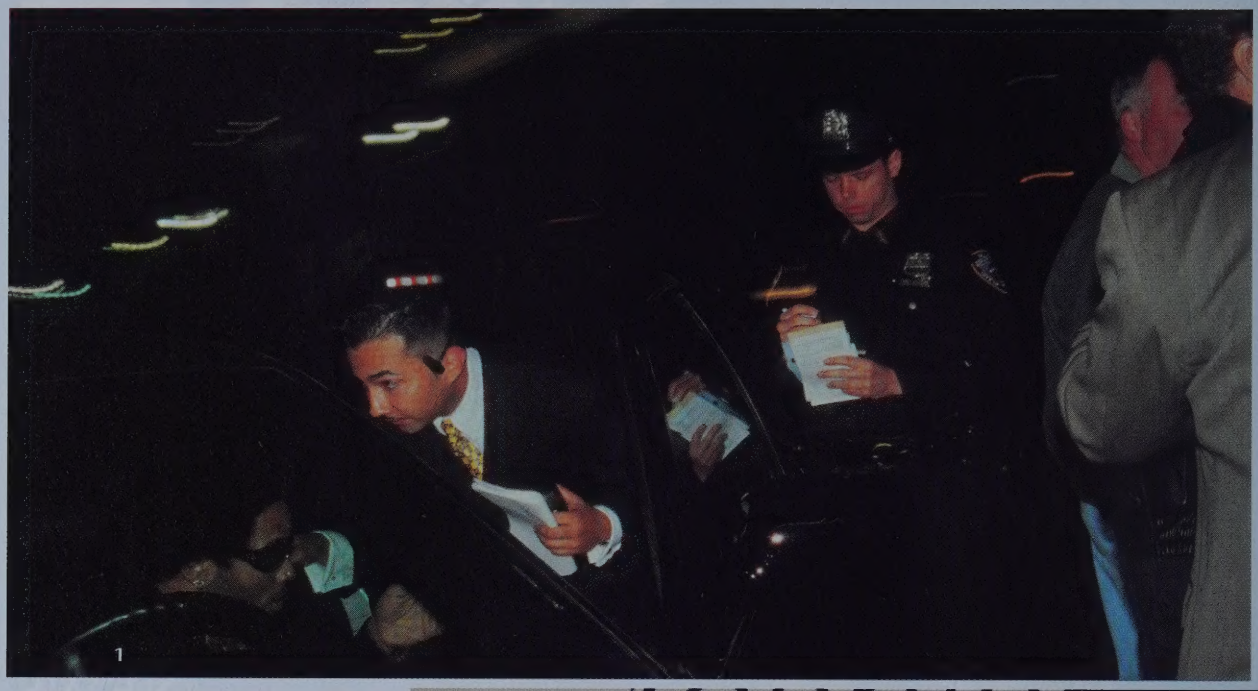

Rock Steady Romeo

1. Lenny Kravitz chauffeurs his limo after his driver got arrested outside of the VH1/Vogue Fashion Awards. On a separate occasion, Kravitz himself was stopped by Miami police searching for a bank robber according to an urban online reporter. The rocker matched the description of a man who had just robbed a nearby bank -- black, unshaven, with an afro and wearing green pants and a T-shirt. Kravitz was unshaven, wearing olive khakis and was not carrying ID.

"You think that [it was racial profiling] on one hand, and on the other hand you say, "Well, I did fit the description somewhat," Kravitz said.

"I'm kind of torn between [the two]. But what I need to find out is why I was cuffed first."

Most Fashionable Females

2. Macy Gray was crowned most Fashionable Female Artist by the sartorial sorority at the 2000 VH1/Vogue Fashion Awards. This bohemian supernova works it for the paparazzi as her designer plays it cool.

Photos by Tina Paul

Man Of Honor

3. Cuba Gooding Jr., the star of Men of Honor and co-host of the 2000 VH1/Vogue Fashion Awards seems over whelmed by admirers. Too bad we can't see those pretty brown eyes.

Just released!
Award-winning calendars
& black erotic images.
The edgy, new 2001
MEN...RUNDU STYLE calendar
FREE full-color, 'behind-the-scenes'
video with your order
click to www.rundu.com
for an experience of a lifetime
Rundu.com

Sex Talk

by Geanie Bond

Geanie Bond is a Licensed Marriage and Family therapist specializing in hypnosis and sex therapy. Send questions to SexTalk@venusmagazine.com

Q&A

Q: My partner has a nasty habit of mentioning her previous partners by telling me how they were in bed. She keeps saying that her ex was a nympho who was always ready to get down for whatever. This makes me very uncomfortable and I feel like I have to compete with someone that I don't know. I want to please my partner in every way, and I know that I am a good lover, but I hate to feel inadequate. What can I do?

Missing Out, Bronx, N.Y.

A: Dear Missing Out,

Yes, this behavior might be characterized as a "nasty habit". Specifically, if the two of you are in a monogamous relationship. The key word here is monogamous. If your partner is sharing sexual experiences involving other partners, your relationship bed consists of at least three participants, if not more, at any given time.

I must add here, however, that some sex partners enjoy this type of sharing as a form of erotica. However, this is not your situation. You are clearly uncomfortable. Your discomfort is warranted. There, not only, is an obvious violation to the nature of the monogamous relationship; but, this person may have some issues surrounding boundaries, trust, and, most certainly, immaturity.

Is this person, perhaps, sharing with you behaviors that her former partners believed were private acts between the two of them? If she is describing former partners' sexual behaviors to you, what might that mean, with regard to her reporting the sexual behaviors which the two of you share?

And, if your partner is utilizing these "sharing sessions" as a strategy, in order to spark the edge of competition, which, admittedly, you are grasping, your relationship is in further need of exploration and examination.

Sex is not an "Olympic Competition". Rather, it is the sum total and exchange of expression of that which two people feel for one another. It is unique in that the expression which these two people create cannot be duplicated nor compared. The individuals in each relationship are different and unique, and so, too, is the character of their expression.

Agony Aunt

by Nigel Adey

Q&A

Q: I'm an aspiring rapper and I like to hook up with men. I know a producer who wants to get me signed, but he says he doesn't work with 'faggots' because they'll give him a bad rep. I am not out to my family and friends; no one knows about my attraction to guys. I'm thinking of getting a girlfriend, which wouldn't be a problem for me. But is it worth it?

What to do? Atlanta

A: You want to sleep with men but you think a woman on your arm would look good and keep your homophobic record producer happy, and you want to know if it is worth it?

How you treat the person you sleep with or have a relationship with should not be decided by their sex. If it's a man or a woman they deserve to be treated with honesty and respect. As an artist you need to have faith in yourself, in your work and in your judgment. If you let the ignorance of others influence you, you will get nowhere.

What is the girl going to get out of your relationship besides a good story to sell if and when you are successful? Would you enjoy deceiving her? You should be honest with her because you're not being honest with anyone, including yourself. You are living a lie which I cannot condone simply because it will only cause harm in the long run.

As an emerging artist, to call your first release "I Love Man Meat" would not be the smartest career move. If others cannot recognize your talent, appearing "straight" will be no help. And that record producer? Next time he makes a homophobic remark, put your hands on his shoulders, look him dead in the eye, and tell him to shut-up or put-up.

Send your questions to Agony Aunt@venusmagazine.com

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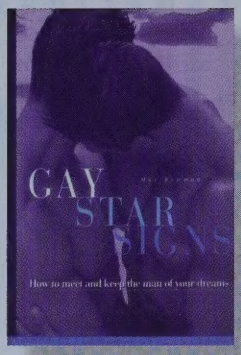

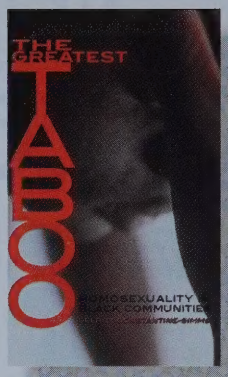

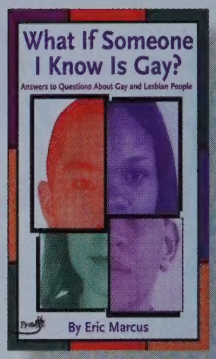

Gay Star Signs

by Max Bowman
Marlowe & Co., 2001
ISBN 1-56924-605-X

Where the two halves of the pages meet, you will find a quick-glance symbol bar that will allow you to try to align your relationship symbol (heart), friends symbol (handshake icon), career symbol (briefcase), and family symbol (two adults and a child icon). You can see how compatible you are with a potential lover by seeing how many of your symbols match.

A compatibility chart at the end of each section on the bottom half of the page summarize how that particular star sign interacts with all of the other signs in the four key areas of life: family, relationships, career, and friends. Also, a forecast for each of the twelve zodiac signs gives you a flavor of what might lie ahead.

Trail-blazing in its innovative package, fun to use, entertaining and inspiring, Gay Star Signs is perfect for gay men interested in turning to the stars for answers.

The Greatest Taboo:
Homosexuality in Black Communities

by Delroy Constantine-Simms
Alyson Books, 2001
ISBN 1-55583-564-3

A collection of hard hitting and controversial essays that expose the myths surrounding the taboo issue of Black homosexuality. The appropriately titled book includes issues about homosexuality in Africa, black churches, contemporary black music magazines and music. With contributions from internationally acclaimed academics such as Henry Louis Gates Jr. and bell hooks, "you can rest assure that this book will raise eyebrows among those who continue to harbor homophobic attitudes towards the gay and lesbian community," says Constantine-Simms. He is a freelance journalist and co-editor of Teachers For the Future, the online news editor for Blacknet news, and the chief news reporter for the London based Black newspaper, *The Post*.

What if Someone I Know is Gay?
Answers to Questions About Gay and Lesbian People

Eric Marcus, 2000
Penguin Putnum,
ISBN 0-8431-7611-3

Kids have questions, sometimes very blunt questions. And they deserve answers. The problem is, when it comes to answering questions about gay and lesbian people and related issues, most grownups are unsure at best or prejudiced at worst. Author, Eric Marcus, offers children and teenagers the no-nonsense, age-appropriate answers they're looking for. And at the same time, he throws adults a welcome lifeline when they're faced with questions that leave them struggling for the right thing to say.

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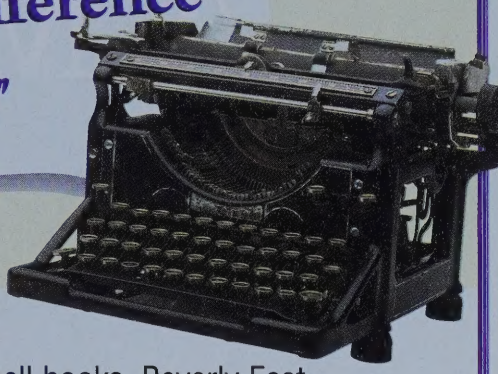

Invited Speakers Include:

Penny Mickleberry, Dione Brand, Barbara Smith, Lisa Moore, bell hooks, Beverly East, Zadie Smith, Patricia Elam, Liani Mataka, Julianne Malveaux, Rebecca Walker, Octavia Butler, Shireen Lewis, Renita Weems, Valerie Jean, Debrena Jackson Gandy, Tina Ansa, Sandra Jackson-Opoku, Bertice Berry, R. Erica Doyle, and others.

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Who Wants to be A Millionaire?

Everyone dreams of hitting the jackpot but investing in the stock market is a more realistic way to prepare for your future.

If you don't know the ropes and feel intimidated by Wall Street types, cast your fears aside and begin to familiarize yourself with the market. Information is everywhere. When was the last time you read the financial section of your newspaper or caught up on financial news on CNN or the Internet? Understanding the market helps you to address your concerns if you plan on investing.

Like many investors, you may be regularly tempted by tips on hot investments. Looking for that one stock that is going to make you millions? Forget it! Piling all of your money into one hot stock may be tempting but can also be dangerous.

Here are a few tips to help keep you out of the danger zone.

1. As a first time investor, be conservative with the amount of stock that you purchase.

It is important to be able to follow all of your stocks. And it is equally important that you chart their business performance. A good target range for a first time investor is about 5 to 15 stocks. So then, how do you act as an investor? Don't put all of your eggs in one basket! Diversify your investments so that you have more than one stock in many industries. If one of your stocks is performing poorly, a good performance by another stock, or the stability of a group of stocks can offset your loss. Having more than one stock in your portfolio is important. Stocks that go up fast may plummet just as rapidly.

2. Buy stocks that relate to products and services that you know and use everyday.

When choosing your stocks, it is a best to stick to what you know. Don't invest in a company that produces fiber optics if you have no idea what fiber optics is.

3. Once you've purchased your stocks, hold on to them--think long term!

Stocks are notoriously unpredictable over periods of less than three years. However, beyond that, the direction is up more often than not. When your investment horizon is 10 years or more, stocks are the only place to be. Be sure to keep maintenance of your stocks over time. Check up on them annually, but not only for their stock performance. In other words, instead of focusing on whether your stock has dropped or gone up a few points, focus on how the business is performing. Are they hiring a new CEO? Are they expanding or downsizing? Are they coming out with a new product? For instance, if you own GAP stock, a good way to check up on your investment would be to drop in on the GAP near you. Keep in mind the following: Is the service friendly? Are there people constantly in the store? Have they come out with a new line of clothing? Inquiries like these will give you insight into the overall performance of the companies you invest in. As an investor, it helps to be curious about the company in which you invest.

There are numerous opportunities for first time investors to get in on the action. There is money out there to be made and you don't need a MBA to do it. Choose your stocks wisely and be sure to spread them out over many industries.

Don't wait in vain to win the lotto. Build a portfolio. You will get more from your money than fabulous dreams.

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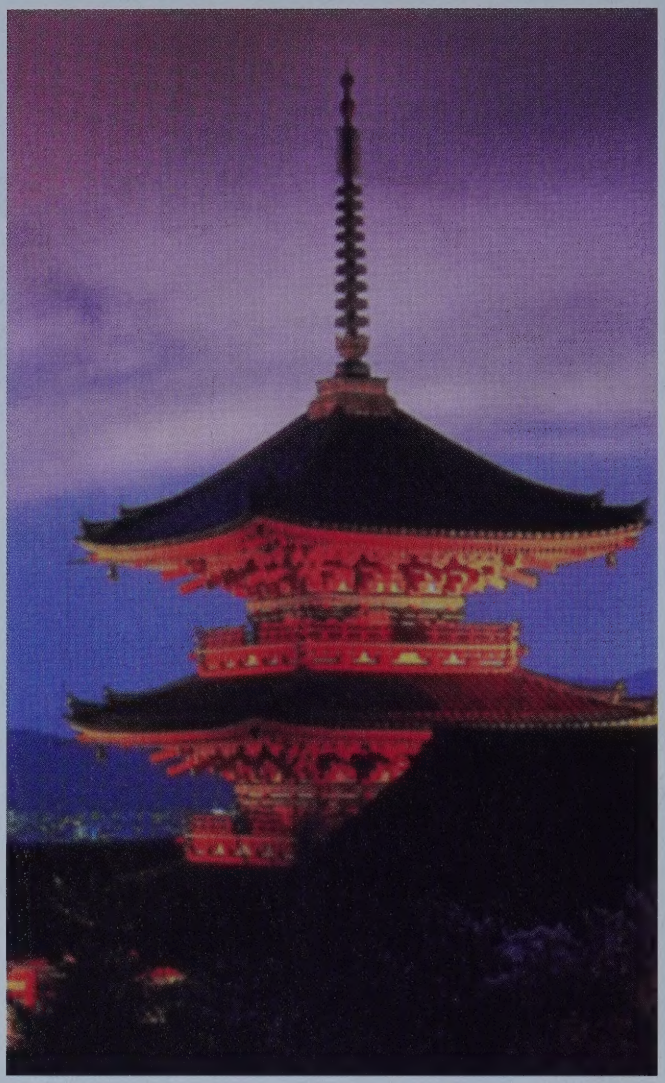
continued from page 39

that here the direct in your face "is it or ain't it" approach that Westerners--especially North Americans--are famous for, simply doesn't fly. You may think he likes you because he let you grab his ass on the dance floor. But it may turn out that he considered it too rude or embarrassing to tell you to take a hike at the time. Rest assured if that is the case, you won't be getting any from him or his friends any time soon. Don't get me wrong, some boys here can be very direct, but those who are leave no room for doubt. For example, "Is it true that black men have huge dicks?" asks Takayuki directly. "Are Latin men really as horny as they say?" questions the 125lbs Tarou, looking like the jail-bait of your dreams. Who says this is an inscrutable people? So if in doubt, wait until the second or third time he agrees to dance with you before trying to hook up with him.



Grow a thick skin. Japanese people have not had to deal with race relations the same way that many of us from the Americas and Europe have. They do not understand some of the do's and don'ts of polite interracial interaction. So if you get to that guy's house and he has a big-lipped, black faced lawn jockey in his living room, take it as a complement. You'll see enough hair salon afros and black face make up to recast The Color Purple with out hiring a single black person. They aren't insulting you--they want to be you. Get over it.

Actions speak louder than words I can't emphasize enough how important correct social interactions are here. Confrontations are avoided at all costs, and because of this, Japanese people have what would seem a rather passive aggressive way of going about things. Words are concrete and therefore treacherous. Actions can be interpreted in many ways and are thus infinitely more flexible (or deniable which ever way you want to take it). So if he says he's going to call you and he doesn't, take the hint the first time because he probably didn't lose your number. On the other hand -though you may never hear a Japanese boy say the words "I love you"- the chances are that if he's doing your laundry or washing your dishes when you aren't paying attention, that's the real thing.

Be open to the experience and take it all in. You'll make mistakes and you won't understand for a while but it gets easier, and learning new things is what its all about, right? Hell, if you want it to be the same as where you come from stay there, damn it! If you ever find yourself in a Tokyo fruit shop and can't figure out whether that boy is a pear or an apple, take my advice and just put it in your mouth and swallow. It may not be what you were expecting, but it is sweet.

"Japanese culture values polite social interactions almost above anything else. So a smile can mean anything from 'I would like to marry you this instant' to 'I can't believe you actually think you can talk to me.' "

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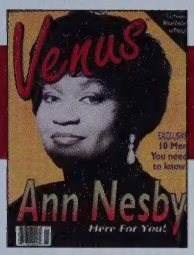

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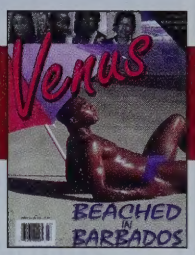

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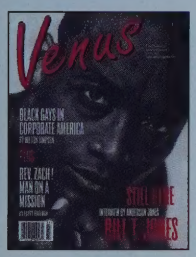

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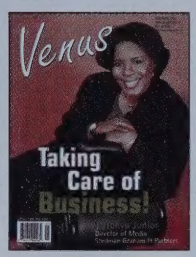

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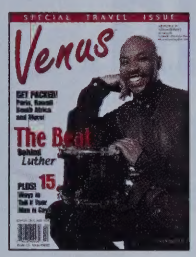

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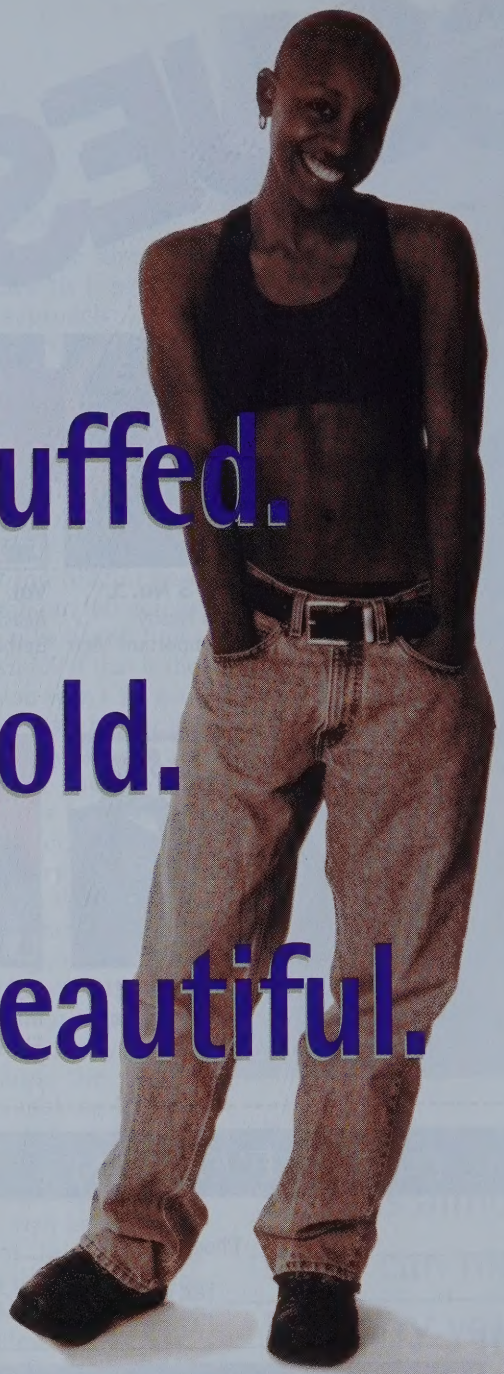

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February 15-18, 2001
National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Conference, Oakland City Center, Oakland, CA. To register call 510-302-0930 or visit www.nblglf.org.

February 17-21
National Conference on African-Americans and AIDS in Washington, DC. at the Renaissance Washington Hotel in, D.C. Registration is free but move fast because the conference fills up quickly and you must register on line, check venusmagazine.com for conference registration info.

March 17-18, 2001
8th International Gay & Lesbian Business and Entertainment Expo, Jacob K. Javis Convention Center New York City.

April 12-15, 2001
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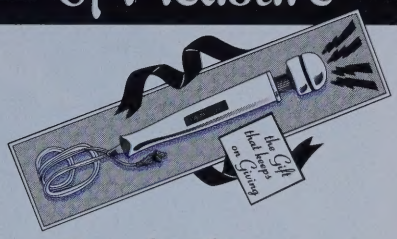

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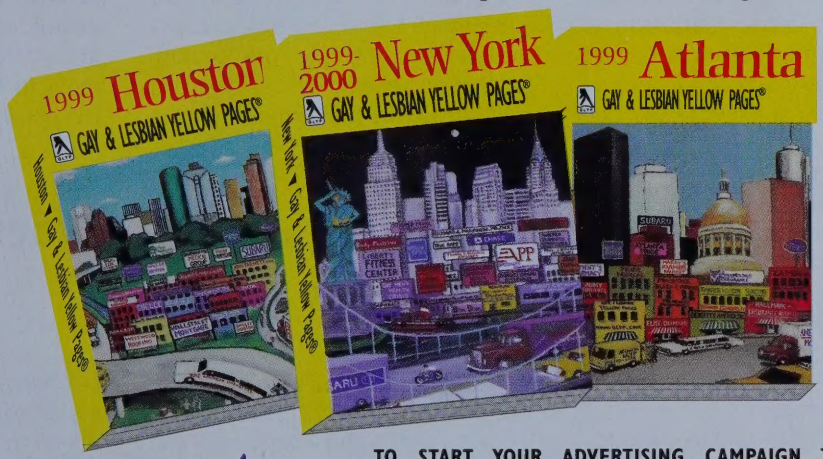

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Langston Hughes

Hughes was poet, playwright and novelist extraordinare of the Harlem Renaissance. His role in American history and arts is legendary and challenges us to love and to persevere for our dreams. Hughes reflects upon his place in life in the poem Cross, where he asks: "I wonder where I'm gonna die/Being neither white nor black?"

Huges' father, a wealthy landowner lived in Mexico, and his black mother, in the South. He attended Columbia University briefly before the magic of Greenwich Village and its jazz allured his senses. He responded by sailing around the world. But it was in Harlem, after a bleak pandemic of depression across the land, where Hughes and equally passionate bohemians cultivated an artistic way of life, which became the Renaissance. This is where Hughes made a name for himself as a poet, a civil rights leaders and the lover of the customs and idiosyncrasies of his people.

"I wonder where I'm gonna die/Being neither white nor black?"

Hughes transcends the sexuality straight-jacket. He was a lover of both women and men. He was a lover of people who enhanced his vision. His life has encouraged many to embrace themselves and to move to the rhythms of their hearts. His ecstatic humor and contemplative insights have inspired countless hearts. The magnificence of his oeuvre is solid with tributes to our African Ancestry and the black, vivid beauty of the American landscape. Hughes' literary prowess imbibe us with the visceral delights of music and laughter, life and the soar of the sea.

DM

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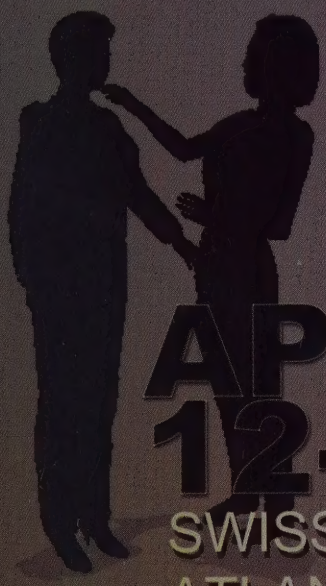

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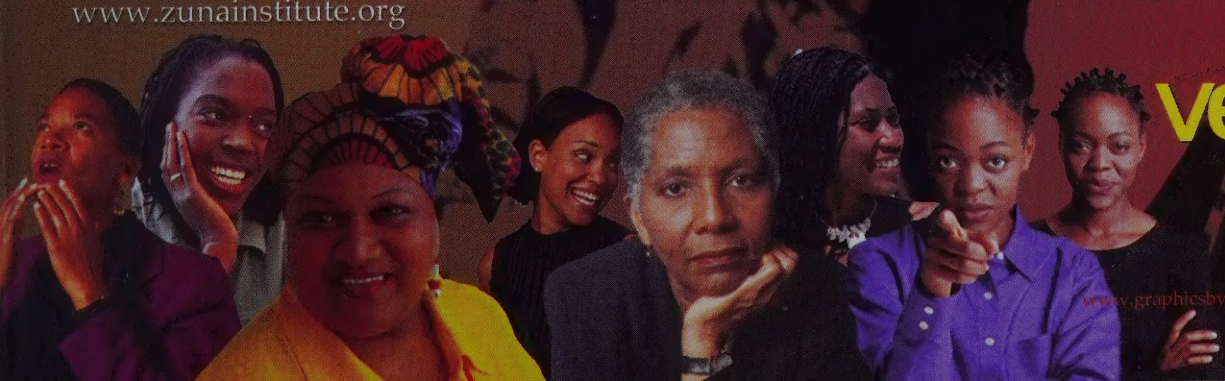

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SUSTIVA fits the way you live because you take it just once a day. Bedtime dosing is recommended during the first few weeks to improve tolerability of nervous system symptoms. It can be taken with or without meals, however high-fat meals should be avoided. There's no need to drink lots of liquid.

GENERALLY TOLERABLE SIDE EFFECTS

SUSTIVA is generally well tolerated, with no long-term toxicities observed.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting SUSTIVA. They tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. If you have these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately to discuss your therapy. There have been a few reports of suicide, but SUSTIVA has not been established as the cause. Mild to moderate rash is a common side effect of SUSTIVA. Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in animals given SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA should not be taken by patients who are also taking any of the following: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives as there is the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects.* See Patient Information about SUSTIVA on the following pages.

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Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
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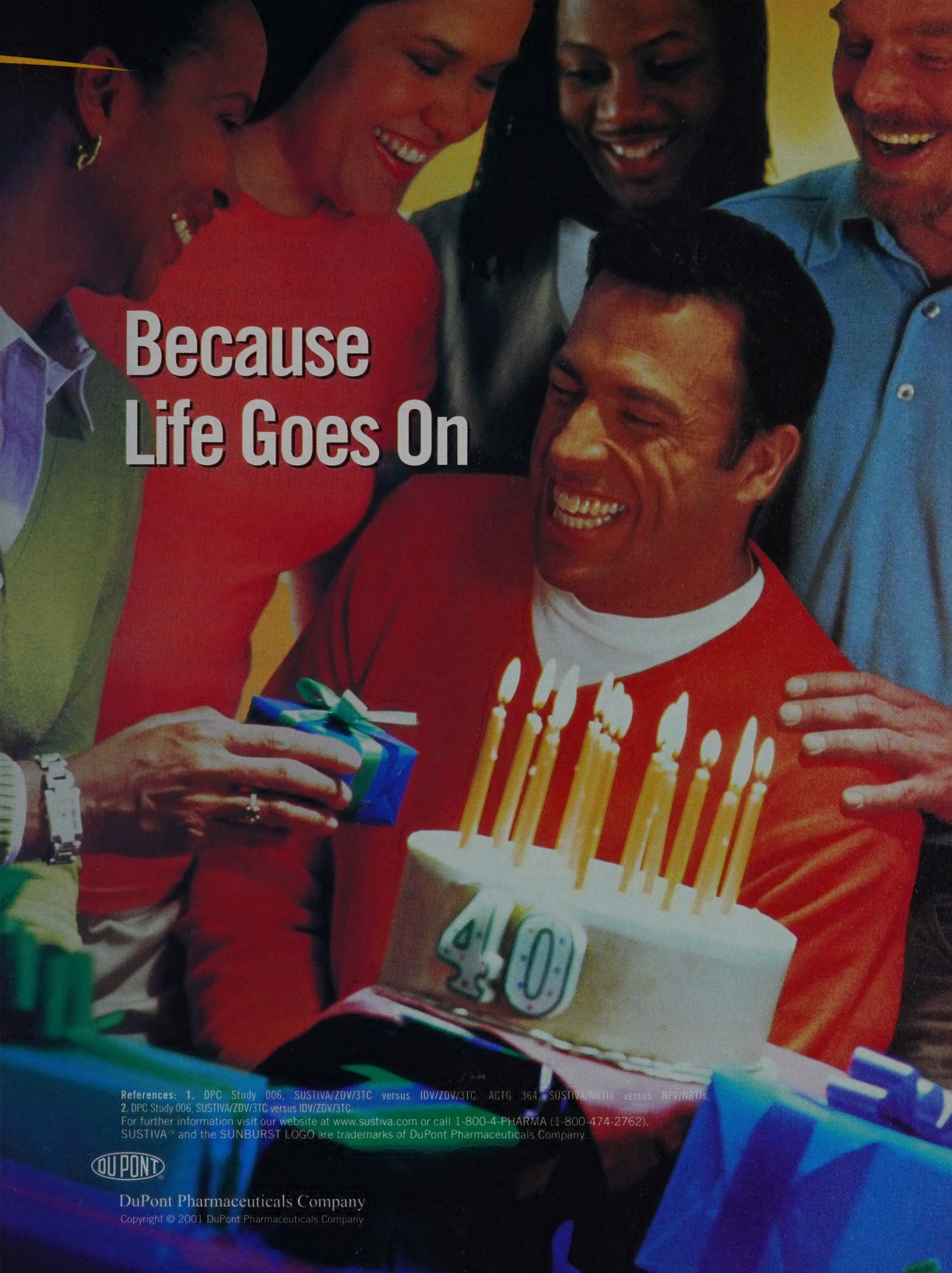

References: 1. DPC Study 006, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC. ACTG 364, SUSTIVA/NRTIs versus NFV/NRTIs.
2. DPC Study 006, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC.

For further information visit our website at www.sustiva.com or call 1-800-4-PHARMA (1-800-474-2762).

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Once Daily
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efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA* (sus-TEE-vah) for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?
SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?
SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?
SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?
- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk, or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?
Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?
Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?
Talk to your doctor right away if you:
- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had Hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?
A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few patients have actually committed suicide. These problems tend to occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness. You should contact your doctor immediately if you think you are having these symptoms, so your doctor can decide whether you should continue to take SUSTIVA.

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have severe depression, strange thoughts or angry behavior. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?
Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:
- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA**:
- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA**:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?
Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

* SUSTIVA™ is a trademark of DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company.
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6495-03/Rev. February, 2000

contents

features

16 **Back up, Stress!**
You NEVER let 'em see you sweat, which is precisely why stress may be kicking your butt. Find out the best way to keep Miss 'S' off your back.

20 **Elected Out**
The closets at City Hall are just about empty thanks to several courageous Black Gay & Lesbian elected and public officials. More than just gay, they are fierce and passionate about serving others.

24 **In The Bushes**
Washington's got a new and rapidly growing voting block; The Black Gay Republican. These members of Log Cabin Republicans talk about their views and why they made the switch.

VENUS

On the Cover: Model Andrea Gould, photographed exclusively for Venus by De Alan Wilson. The American Flag is courtesy of Weiss & Mahoney, 5th Ave. NYC, creatively draped as a gown by fashion stylist Jerry Jordan-Brown. Hair & Make-up by Gerard Dure' for Gerard Dure' Salons, NYC. Shot on location at the home of Jack Faxon, NYC.

departments

10 Letters
'Don't omit lesbians of African Descent.'

12 Home
Create the Ultimate home office

14 News & Notes
Nancy Wilson on breast cancer awareness

30 Readership Survey
It's Important. Complete your survey and mail it today!

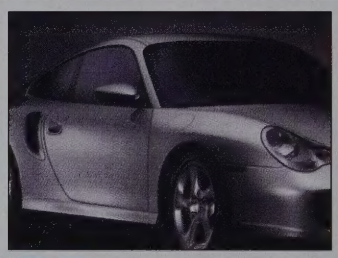
44 Back Issues
Buy One or Get Them All!

46 Celebrity Sightings
Madame Tussaud's New York, Will Smith, Star Jones, Venus Williams

50 Books
Brothers of New Essex, Black White & Jewish, Autobiography by Natalie Cole, Brown Sugar

55 SexTalk
'How do I tell him that I'm not comfortable during sex?'

58 Legendary
Bayard Taylor Rustin, musician, world traveler, and architect of the 1963 March on Washington

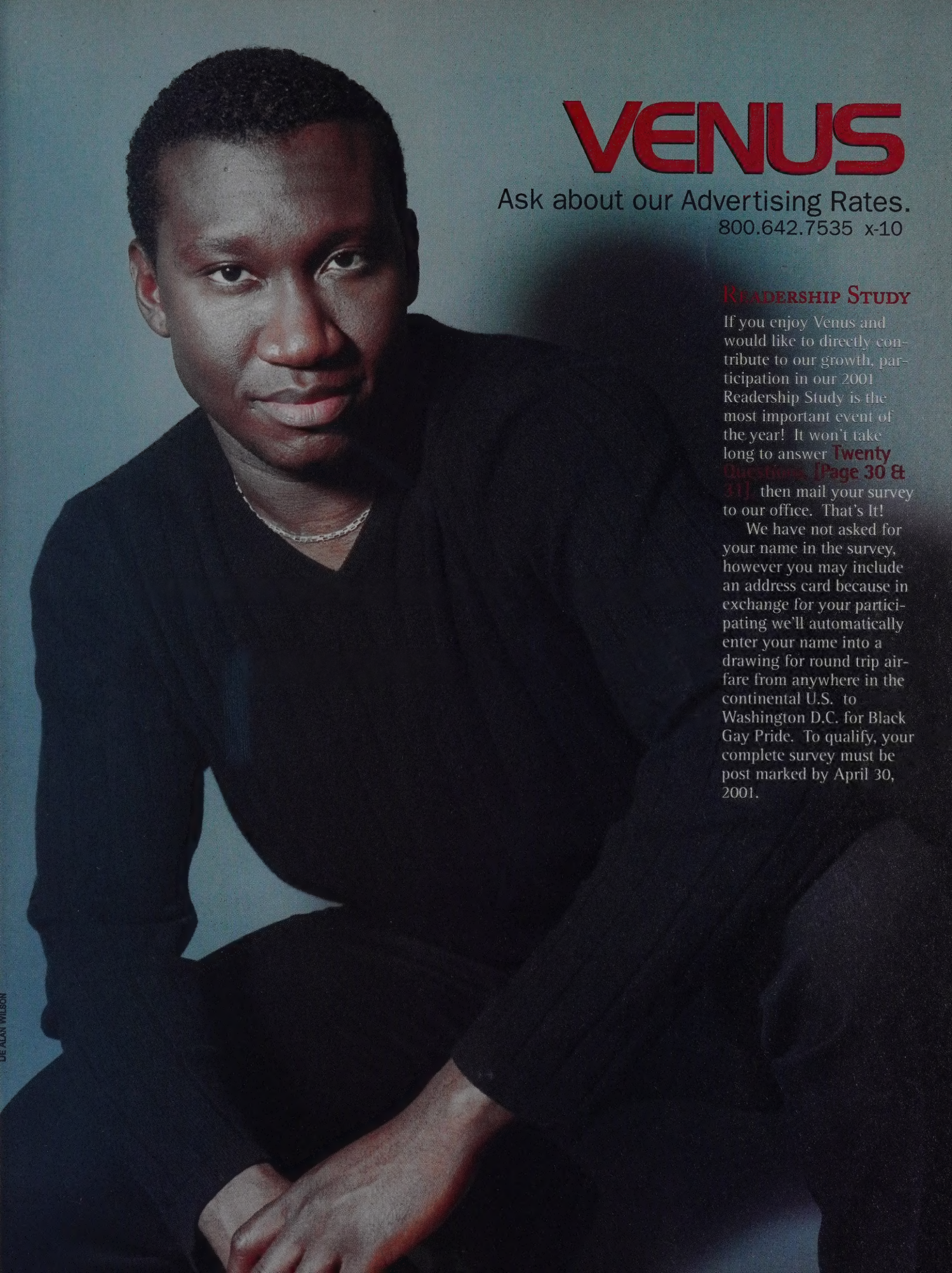


46 Madame Ru
The incomparable RuPaul is one of several New Yorkers whose likenesses are featured in wax.

36 Test Drive
Get in. Get comfortable with style, speed and space. Take a ride with us to the 2001 Auto Shows.

40 Office Threads
What to rock at the office; from the board room to the all important cocktail reception.

12 Home Work
It's time to update your home office and we've got all the latest gadgets and accessories.



Readership Study

If you enjoy Venus and would like to directly contribute to our growth, participation in our 2001 Readership Study is the most important event of the year! It won't take long to answer **Twenty Questions** [Page 30 & 31] then mail your survey to our office. That's It!

We have not asked for your name in the survey, however you may include an address card because in exchange for your participating we'll automatically enter your name into a drawing for round trip airfare from anywhere in the continental U.S. to Washington D.C. for Black Gay Pride. To qualify, your complete survey must be post marked by April 30, 2001.

DE ALAN WILSON

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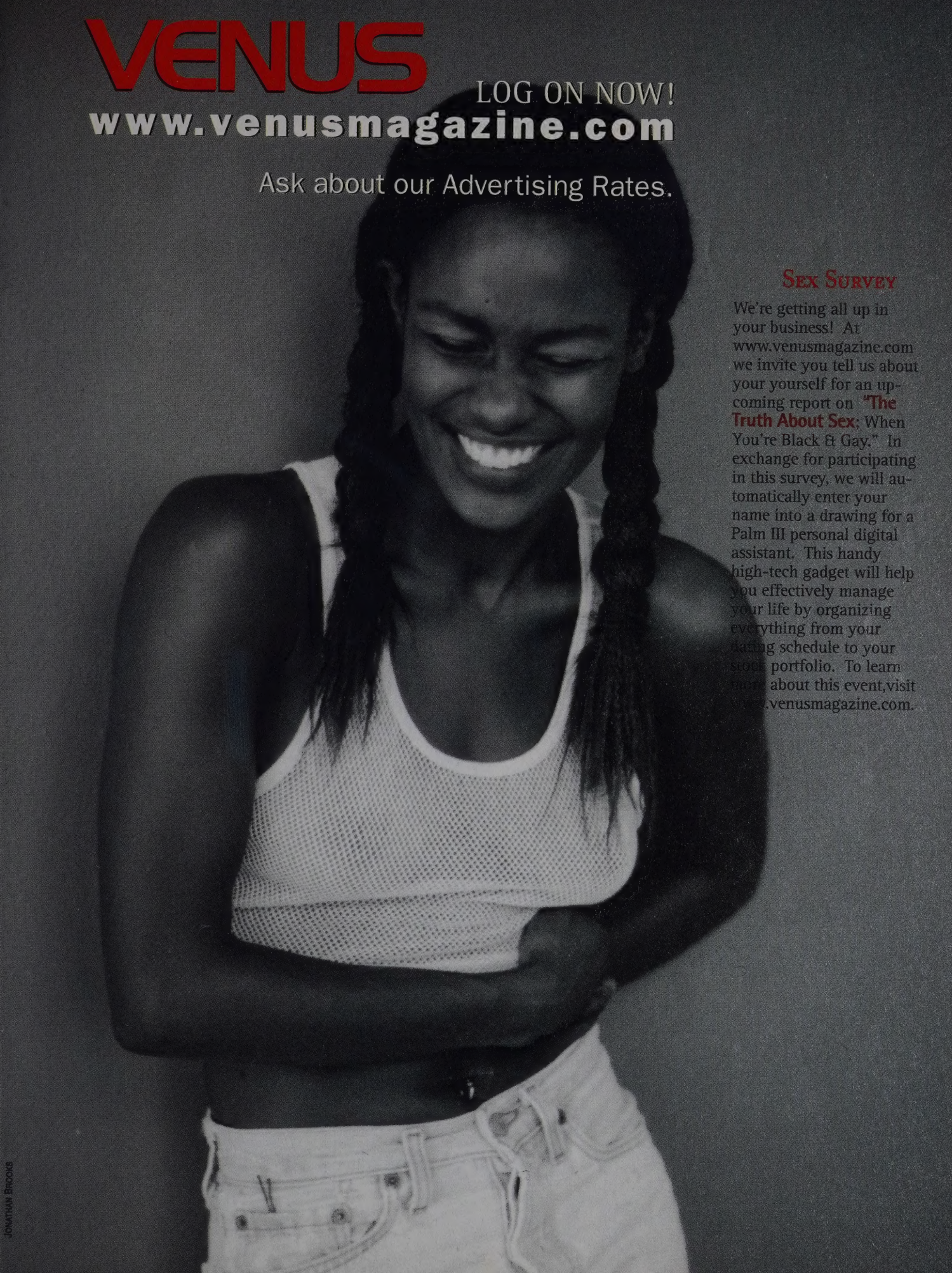

Sex Survey

We're getting all up in your business! At www.venusmagazine.com we invite you tell us about your yourself for an upcoming report on **"The Truth About Sex**; When You're Black & Gay." In exchange for participating in this survey, we will automatically enter your name into a drawing for a Palm III personal digital assistant. This handy high-tech gadget will help you effectively manage your life by organizing everything from your dating schedule to your stock portfolio. To learn more about this event,visit www.venusmagazine.com.

JONATHAN BROOKS

You're Back!

I am THRILLED that Venus is back on line. The site is Lovely! I am glad back issues are available and that excerpts of the current and back issues are a part of the website.
ERIC, via the internet

Whew!

You all are doing a fabulous job. I (and many others) have been watching and waiting for what you were going to do next, and greater things are expected from you. Your product has a warm, luxurious feel, and I'm personally as proud of it as if I had had a hand in it. That's a hell of a feat, that is, to create an atmosphere in which people can feel an integral part of . . . I hope, though, that when you say that you would love to hear from us, that you're open to some constructive and loving criticism, as well.

Ironically yesterday, I responded to a Detroit Free Press article in which a journalist continually eluded to the "gay community" completely omitting the other half of our culture, that being women us lesbians. What we have learned through endless panel discussions and public dialogue about Black gay/lesbian communities is that men and women in our communities have the same distinct issues as do men and women in other communities. Sexism and dabs of patriarchy are just as alive and well, in our communities.

You all seem to be planning to promote thinking and present articles that reflect lesbian issues, etc., etc., that is clear. But, I'm hopeful that if it is your intention (because I could be mistaken about what they are) for [VENUS] to reflect the goals, dreams, views, and entertainment of both males and females in our communities, then I only suggest that you don't thrust lesbians of African descent into a position of falling under a proverbial gay male umbrella.

I'm considering, not at all to patronize you, that the very term lesbian may not be a part of your everyday language. On the other hand, in a nationally read public magazine, I think that the bar is raised (so to speak) relative to the imperative to reach out, thoroughly so, to be entirely inclusive of both Black gay men, and lesbian women. If we don't, I fear, then, that we take on some of the exact same patterns of other communities who exclude our beautiful presence from their phraseology (and refer to us as, "and others").
Terry Lynn, via the internet

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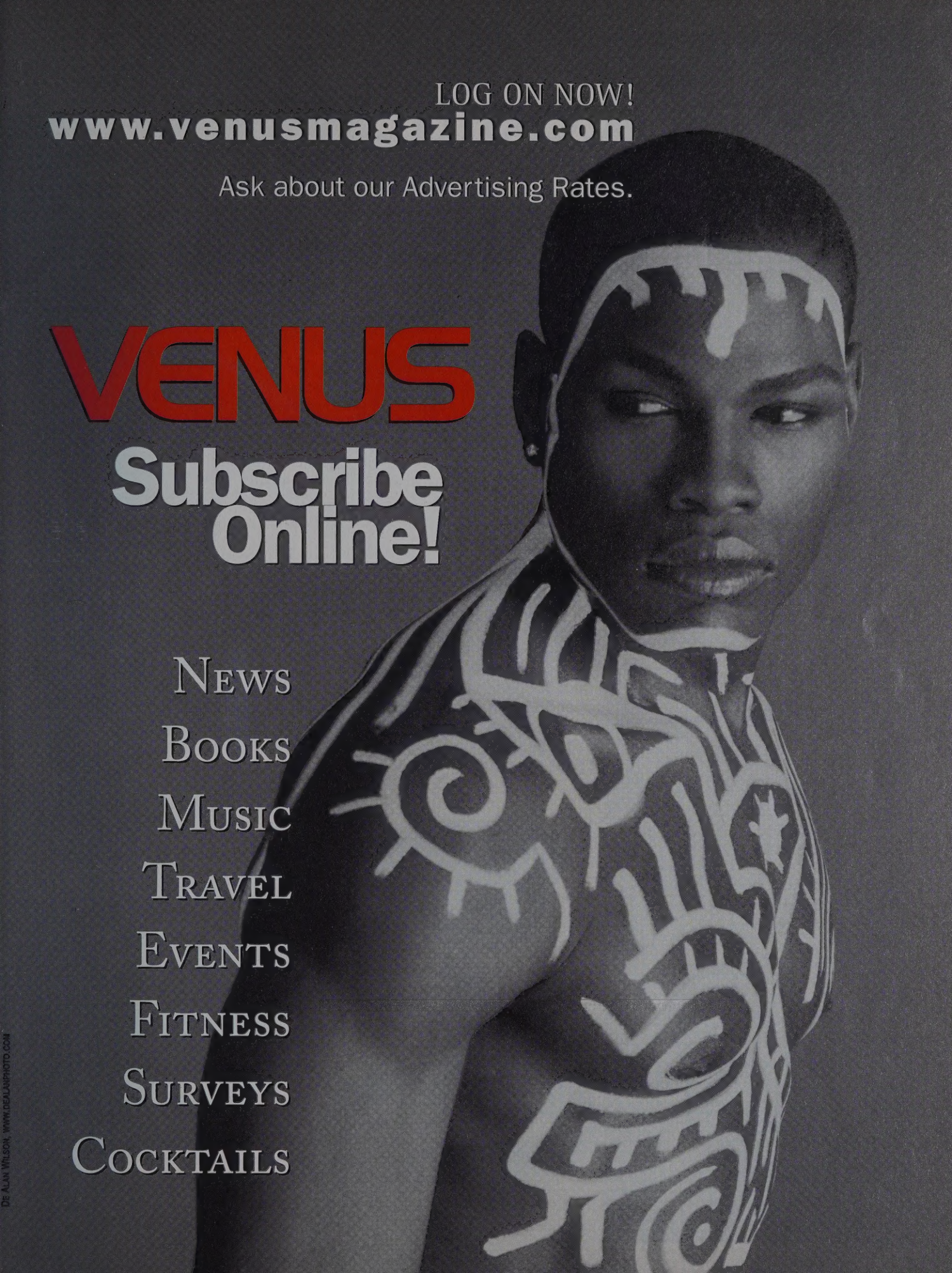


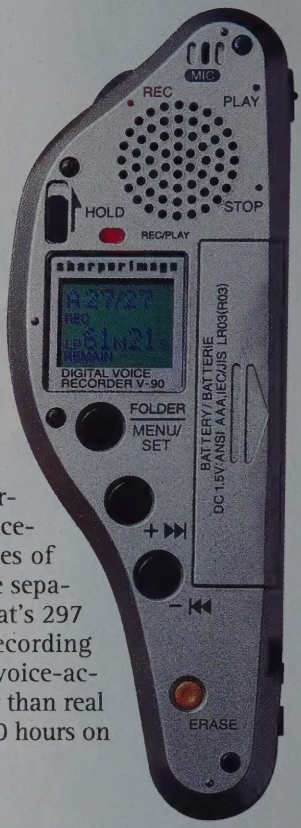
DE ALAN WILSON, WWW.DEALANPHOTO.COM

Necessities! for the Ultimate Home Office

Having exactly what you need makes working from home a breeze. Check our Buying Guide for pricing on page 56.

Automatic Light Controller with Sound & Motion Activation

Replace your "dumb" light switch with this ultra-convenient appliance from Sharper Image. It saves energy, helps keep walls cleaner (it's hands-free!), improves safety in home or office, and has a cool blue LCD menu for foolproof operation. It's great for rooms where users rarely think to turn the lights off. The Sound Sensor's highest setting detects a voice at 20 feet away; there are seven levels, including the lowest (off completely). The Motion Sensor detects "warm" infrared movement only.



Palm IIIc

Palm organizers are invaluable in organizing our lives, but that dull black-and-white screen just gets tedious after a while. Well, now you can organize in color! All your most important information- calendar, e-mail, address book, date book, and memos- leap out in bright, cheerful colors that'll stimulate even the most worn-out worker. Its vivid matrix TFT color display provides high contrasts that make reading easier, and you can synchronize daily with your PC to keep data safe. Don't ever leave home without it.

Digital Voice Recorder

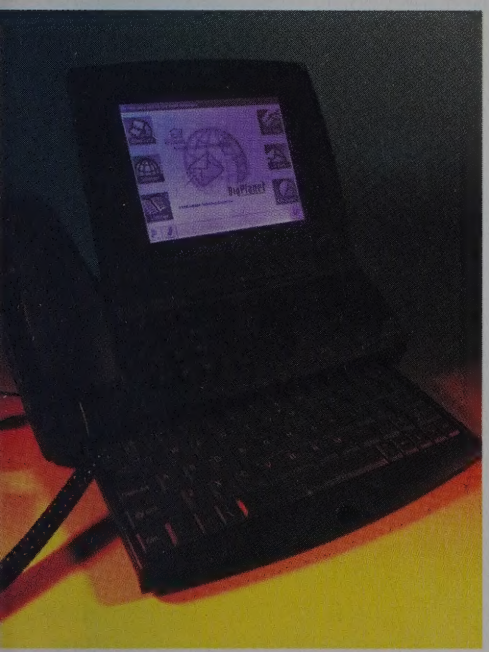
When anyone starts a sentence with, "Now, don't forget..." reach for this superior memo recorder with voice-activated microphone, dynamic speaker and 90 minutes of flash memory. Recordings can be organized into three separate folders, each capable of storing 99 messages – that's 297 distinct memos. LCD screen shows time, date and recording time remaining. Select high or low sensitivity for the voice-activated microphone. Quick-play option goes 30% faster than real time. Includes convenient hand strap. Runs for about 10 hours on one AAA battery.

The Swoper Chair

Move while you sit! Low back pain makes this ergonomic chair a must have for the modern home/office. Introducing the German-engineered Swopper, a revolutionary new concept in sitting. The Swopper converts a seated task into fluid motion that promotes a healthy spine. To Swop, you must begin by adopting the correct sitting position on the Swopper. The opening in the base ring must face front. Legs should be uncrossed with both feet flat on the floor and knees at a 90-degree angle. Sit at the apex of the seat cushion and the Swopper spring design automatically puts your back in the correct posture.

Office Travel Kit

Traveling with a notebook computer is not enough – that's why you need a ready-to-go desktop and drawerful of essential office supplies. The kit includes a sensor pen that blinks silently for cell phone calls; a calculator/LCD alarm clock that displays date, local time and time in 16 world cities; 200-year monthly calendar and a countdown timer; highlighter; eyeglass frame screwdriver; ruler; letter opener; business card holder; stapler and staples; paper clips; Post-It® Notes; scissors and the all-important bottle opener / corkscrew /penknife!



iPhone

If you can use a telephone, you can use the iPhone by BigPlanet. Just plug it in and you're ready to go. There are no programs to load, no viruses to fix, and you don't need to call a computer technician. How do you get to the Internet? Just touch the adjustable tilt screen. How do you check your e-mail? Just touch the screen. How do you look up or dial a phone number? You guessed it-Just touch the screen. Want to send e-mail? Pull out the slide away keyboard and send your e-mail by touching the screen. The unit offers excellent phone, email and browser features to enhance your communications experience as well as a built in digital answering machine.

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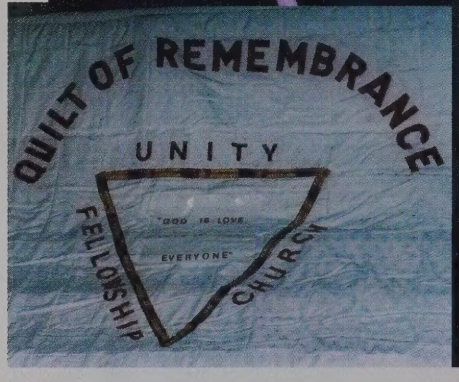
NEIL COLLINS

Reverance and Remembrance

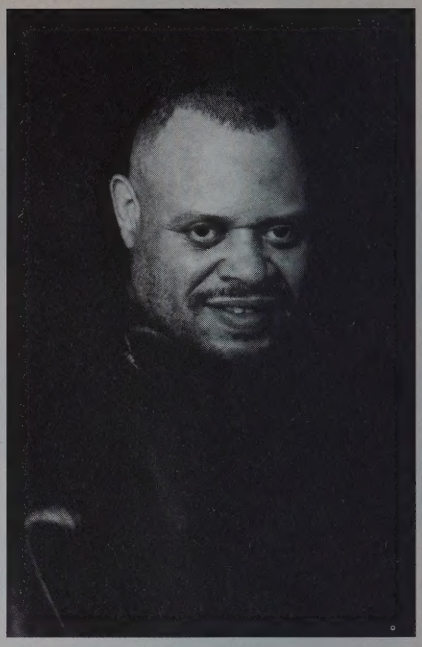
The Bishop Zachery Jones, (l) pastor of Unity Fellowship Church in Brooklyn, NY leads worshippers in a service of remembrance during their annual World AIDS Day event last December. The Honorable Fernando Ferrer, Bronx Borough President, also gave remarks.



Nancy Wilson hosts "A Celebration of Life: Rising Above Breast Cancer"

JOHN LEVY

African American women are dying at higher rates than any other ethnic groups according to the National Cancer Institute. A Celebration of Life:Rising Above Breast Cancer examines this disturbing fact and the three crucial reasons that lead to this outcome: fear, lack of access to health care and racial and economic bias. A one hour documentary hosted by the legendary singer Nancy Wilson, celebrates the lives of African American women who have survived breast cancer and work to educate others about early detection and taking charge of their own breast health. Presented by Howard University Television, the program will air in April -National Cancer Awareness Month. Check local listings. www.acelebrationoflife.org



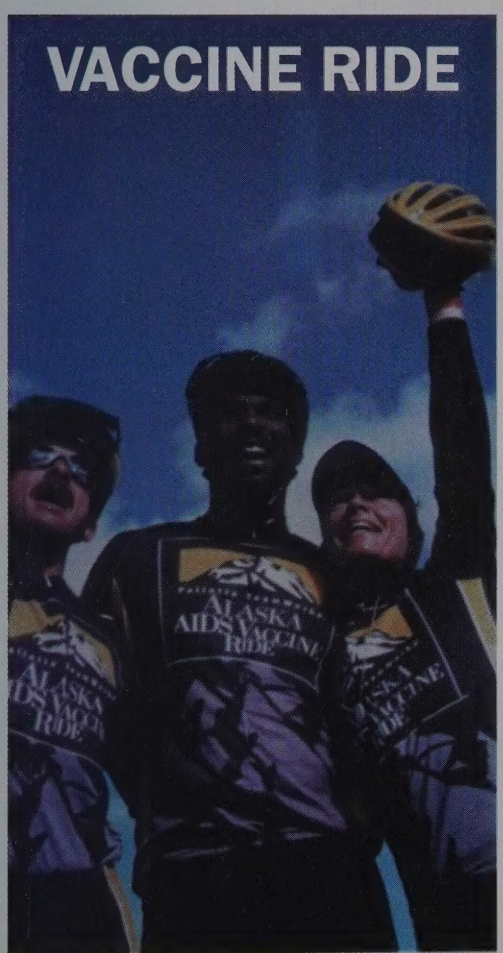
The Wright Touch

Israel Wright Inducted into Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame

Chicago banker/activist, Israel Wright, who turned a photography hobby into a full time, full service company, was recently inducted into the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame. Wright's photos have been internationally published and have been exhibited at museum and community venues throughout Chicago and Milwaukee. His work is included in "The Faces of AIDS," funded by the Chicago Department of Public Health, a traveling exhibit of photographs from a book of the same name, as well as "The Journey," recording African American life on the eve of the new century. An activist at heart, Wright has held leadership positions since 1982 in the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Chicago 2006 Gay Games; ONYXmen, Inc.; Adodi Chicago; Chicago Black Pride 2000; Horizons Community Services; Minority Outreach Intervention Project; Gerber/Hart Library; Midwest Men's Center of Chicago; and S.H.A.R.P. (Southside Health and AIDS Resource Providers).

More than 1,500 men & women from the U. S. and beyond completed the first-ever Pallotta TeamWorks' Alaska AIDS Vaccine Ride, a 510-mile, six-day bicycle journey from Fairbanks to Anchorage, last August. They raised 4.1 million in net proceeds benefitting the work of three of the world's most respected AIDS research scientists and their teams - Dr. Irvin Chen of UCLA AIDS Institute, Dr. David Ho of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center and Dr. Rafi Ahmed of the Emory Vaccine Center-as they work to eradicate AIDS through vaccine.

Registrations are now being accepted for the Pallotta TeamWorks' AIDS Vaccine Ride 2001. Riders, crew members and volunteers are encouraged to join the 6000 anticipated participants. For more information on Pallotta TeamWorks' AIDS Vaccine Rides, call (888) 553-4567 or visit www.vaccineride.org.



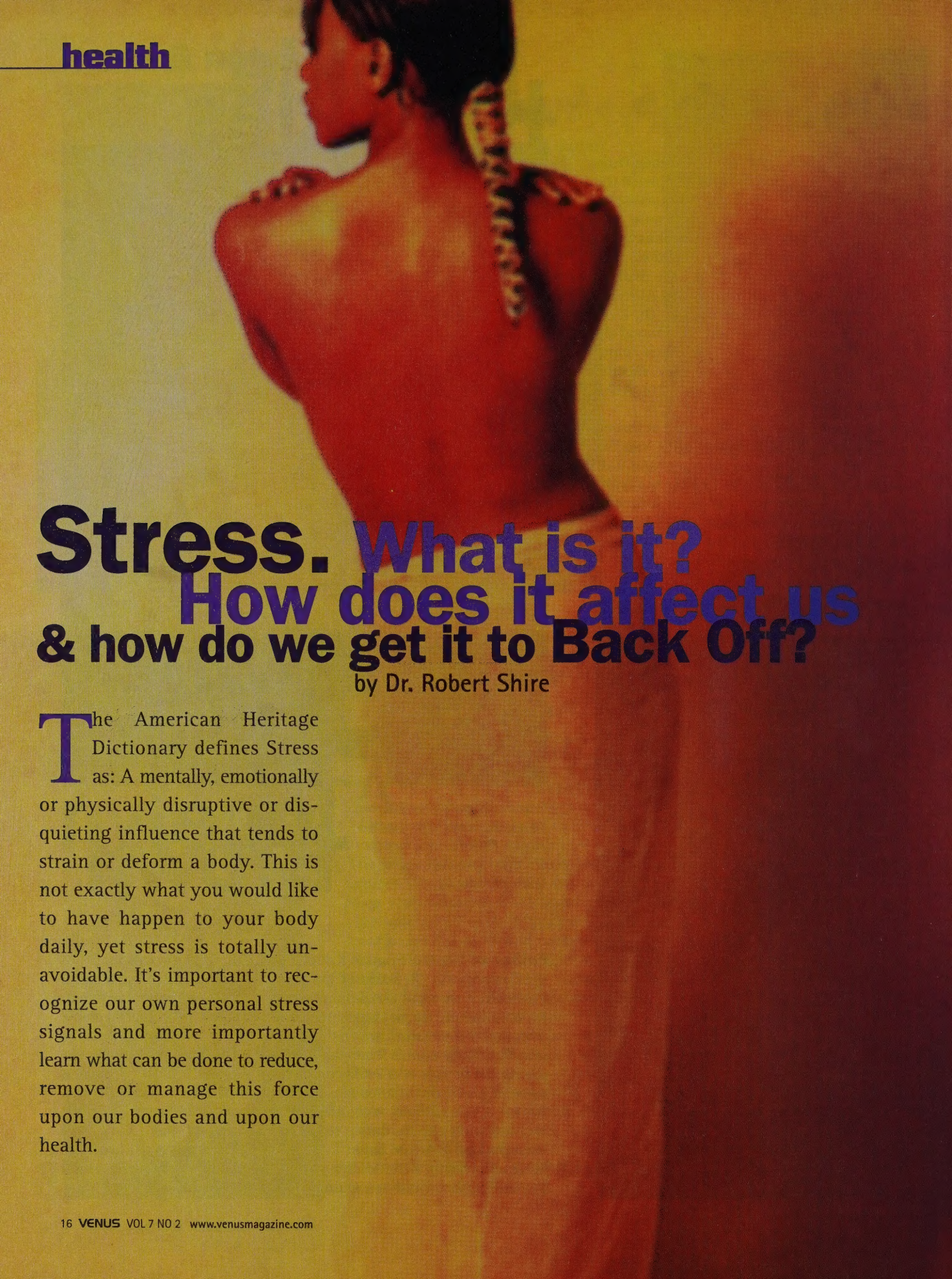
Frankie Knuckles

ISREAL WRIGHT

Grammy Award winner, Frankie Knuckles and the incomparable Jocelyn Brown made a rare Chicago appearance at The House of Blues.

Jocelyn Brown

Father of House Frankie Knuckles was the first ever recipient of the Grammy for "Remixer of the Year" in 1997. His influence as a disc jockey revolutionized dance music and played a pivotal role in the creation of "House" music which has become the universal staple of dance clubs. Knuckles' credits as a producer of Platinum remixes include Toni Braxton's "Unbreak My Heart". His fans are currently enjoying the release of a 2-CD compilation entitled "Chioce" featuring some of his favorite dance music. **Recognize!** The voice of Jocelyn Brown is one of most recognizable in the music industry. Her hits include such classic dance tunes as "Somebody Else's Guy" and "Caught Up In A One Night Love Affiar." Brown has worked with Michael Jackson, Bette Midler--who called her "Magnificent!", John Lennon, Luther Vandross, Quincy Jones and George Benson.



Stress. What is it? How does it affect us & how do we get it to Back Off?

by Dr. Robert Shire

The American Heritage Dictionary defines Stress as: A mentally, emotionally or physically disruptive or disquieting influence that tends to strain or deform a body. This is not exactly what you would like to have happen to your body daily, yet stress is totally unavoidable. It's important to recognize our own personal stress signals and more importantly learn what can be done to reduce, remove or manage this force upon our bodies and upon our health.

The Pressure

It's important to understand the different types of stress on the body. Physical stress can be exemplified by such events as a traumatic car accident, the birthing process, learning to walk or simply holding a telephone with a bent neck. Chemical stress may be caused by vaccinations, antibiotics, caffeine, sugar, smoke and alcohol just to name a few. Emotional stress, which can have the most profound effect, may be caused by life events such as divorce, death of a loved one, illness of a family member, public speaking, or just having a bad hair day.

Since most people experience at least two of these stresses daily, there is little or no chance to experience 100% health and vitality.

The Release

The good news is that the human body is a self-healing organism. If all or most of the 'interference' is removed from the nervous system, it helps the body to defend itself, thus allows us to experience optimum health and vitality.

Find a good chiropractor.

Chiropractors specialize in locating and correcting the effects of stress in the body and allowing the body to develop new strategies for dealing with stress.

Chiropractors primarily focus on the spine because it protects the most important system of the body, the nervous system. The nervous system begins in the brain, extends to the body via the spinal cord, and is responsible for controlling and coordinating the function of every cell, tissue, muscle and organ of the body. It is the master controller. It is even intimately involved with immune function. When the nervous system is functioning free from interference the result is health and wellness. When the effects of stress take it's toll on the body, the spine acts like a circuit breaker and the weak areas misalign and put pressure on nerves. These subluxations interfere with how the body functions. If left unattended for extended periods they will lead to disease or a lack of ease and eventually symptoms. Chiropractors are experts at removing or reducing these subluxations (the cause of dis-ease) through safe and gentle adjustments to the spine. This allows your body to rebalance and heal.

It's as simple as that.

Aside from seeing your chiropractor, here are some other things you can do to relieve the stress in your life.

Breathe

Take a deep breath, drop your shoulders then take another. Just that simple act alone can reduce mountains of stress. Most people are incapable of taking a deep breath because in order to do so you need a flexible spine. Many people unfortunately have very stiff spines that inhibit proper breathing.

Take a walk.

Sometimes just getting out and taking a walk around the block can quiet the mind and body enough to restore back to balance.

Practice Meditation.

Take Yoga, Tai chi, or qi gong. These meditative exercises are proven methods for not only reducing stress but also improving health and vitality.

Get a massage.

Massage therapy can greatly relax muscles and allow the body to restore back to balance.

Listen

Listen to some soft classical music. They say music calms the savage beast. Imagine what it can do for you.

Make time.

Carve out time for yourself. With today's fast paced life remember to take care of yourself first because if you don't you won't be around for anyone else.

"When the effects of stress take it's toll on the body, the spine acts like a circuit breaker and the weak areas misalign and put pressure on nerves. . . . left unattended for extended periods this can lead to dis-ease or a lack of ease and eventually symptoms."

One Nerve Left

There are a multitude of ways to reduce stress in your life but only one way to remove it from your nervous system. You have only one nervous system. It runs everything. You can't replace it. Keep it healthy, keep it clear. See your chiropractor for a spinal check up and find out how stress is affecting your health.

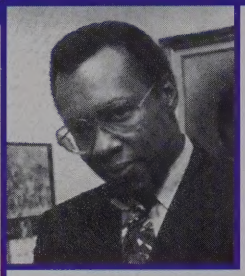
Life is precious. Stop and look around. Your body will thank you and so will your colleagues, friends and family.

Dr. Robert Shire is a licenesed chiroprator practicing in Scarsdale, NY.

The Healthy Living *Pocket Guide*

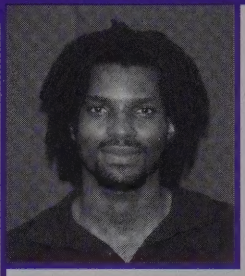
Third edition

Healthy Living



"Information is power. I support the efforts of Cothran Publications to disseminate health information to the African American community. It is now our responsibility to use this information, take action, educate ourselves and pass it on."

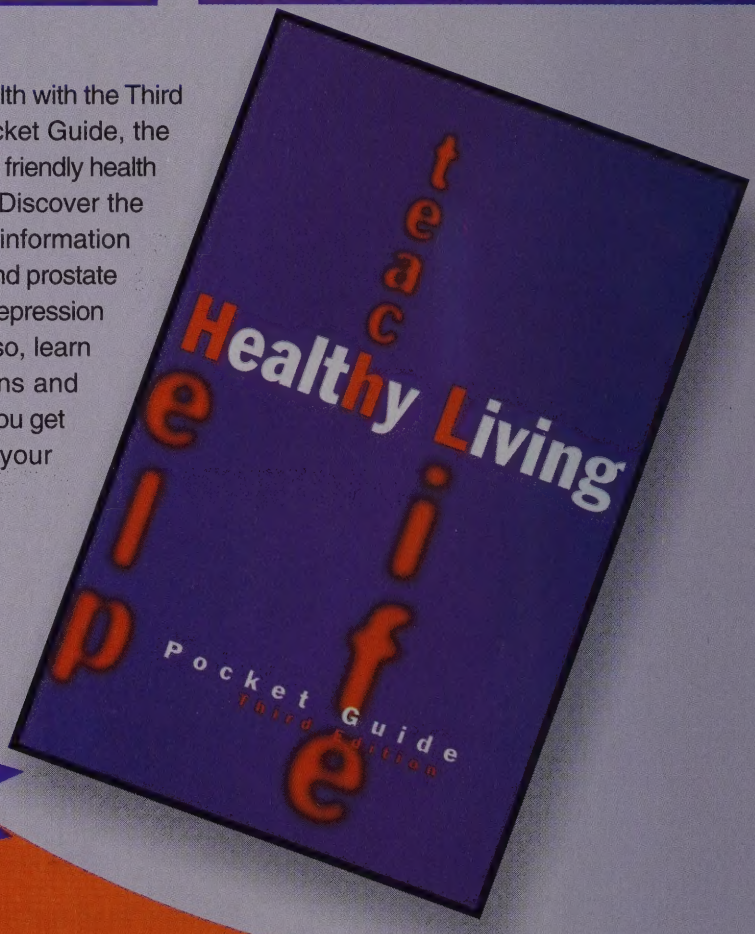
Dr. Stephen B. Thomas,
Emory University



"I've never found a resource that packs so much useful information into a concise guide. And it doesn't just stop at AIDS prevention. Need a primer on women's health issues? The Pocket Guide has got it covered by providing addresses, numbers and contacts in your neck of the 'hood."

LeRoy Whitfield,
Poz Magazine

Share our commitment to good health with the Third Edition of the Healthy Living Pocket Guide, the most informative, concise and user friendly health guide for African Americans today. Discover the very latest prevention & treatment information about HIV/AIDS, breast, cervical and prostate cancers, heart health, hepatitis, depression and addictions, and more! Also, learn how to contact organizations and individuals who can help you get involved in improving your health.



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In Office & Out!

Black Gay & Lesbian Elected and Public Officials are Fierce & Passionate About Service

by Crystal H. Weston

When Decatur, Georgia, Mayor Elizabeth Wilson summoned Kecia Cunningham into her office, Cunningham knew something was up, but couldn't figure out what. Then Mayor Wilson lowered the boom.

"I'm going to retire in two years and want you to run for my seat on the City Commission."

That was an incredible moment, Cunningham remembers. But there were caveats about her candidacy perhaps the mayor didn't understand.

"I don't know my next-door neighbors very well," Cunningham offered feebly.

"That's OK. We'll work on that," the mayor said.

"Well, I don't have a church home," Cunningham cautioned.

"That's OK. We'll work on that," the mayor repeated.

"I'm a lesbian," Cunningham finally blurted out.

"That's OK," Mayor Wilson retorted, "we'll work on that, too."

Cunningham became a candidate and won the commissioner's seat and is an example of a new breed of politician-- black, gay or lesbian and out--holding elective and appointed offices across the nation.

An increasing number of Black lesbians and gays who are out made it into public service during the 1990s despite a prevailing homophobia.

"We know all about that," says Philip Reed, the only out Black member of the New York City Council. If I let that get me down, I wouldn't get up in the morning. That's not a good enough excuse for me."

Not every gay and lesbian politician is so forthright. There can be dire consequences. Members of an unpopular minority group, lesbians and gays campaign with few legal protections against discrimination or other maltreatment. A primary concern of closeted politicians is that they will be pegged as a single-issue candidate, that is, concerned only about gay issues and, consequently, lose credibility with non-gay voters. It's a conundrum. What value to the LGBT community is the politician if he or she can't advocate for it?

Reed "was able on some level to raise my profile and find people who wanted to support me, financially. If I'd remained anonymous, in terms of my sexual orientation, perhaps I would not have had that experience."

Being out actually "makes [running] a lot easier," Commissioner Cuningham believes. " . . . If you're in the closet, there's always the fear of what happens if they find out. Nowadays politics and campaigning are all about mudslinging. You run a far greater risk of having it go negative because people will think you are trying to hide it."

"I don't have any choice, but to be out," George Smith, the first former homeless person appointed

Gregory A. Farley

Commissioner Kecia Cunningham City of Decatur, Georgia

"Our communities are looking for people who are willing to serve on boards and commissions. It may not be glamorous, it may be the waste management board, but the experience you get can put you in a better position to serve on the planning commission, which would put you in a better position to run for the city commission or the city council. Be willing to give back and one of these days someone may call you to their dining room table and tell you, 'I want you to run.' "

to run the San Francisco Mayors' Office on homelessness said when we interviewed him. Smith was appointed by Mayor Brown. A former drug addict who became homeless, Smith became a fixture in the city's shelter system.

"But I didn't like the way I was being treated," he said, and vowed someday "to make the system work better."

A homeless advocate, Smith landed a junior position in the Mayor's Office on Homelessness and worked his way up to Director. On the way up, he managed the shelter in which he once stayed. "I've been blessed that the Mayor gave me the opportunity," Smith opined. "What I learned when I was getting clean off drugs is that when you hide and you're ashamed of things, you give power to other people to use those things against you. I've been through hell and back. I've paid my dues. I'm not ashamed and from that I get strength."

Smith's is not a singular story, but a twice-told tale to those in our community who have stepped out in electoral politics. The 1990s spawned a new group of Black LGBT politicians that is not preoccupied with serving from inside closets and see such efforts as potential hindrances.

"It's about integrity, honesty, and speaking from a place of truth and safety," asserts Andrea Shorter, appointed by San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown to the Community College Board. "If you can't advocate for yourself, how can you advocate for other people?" That's the point of running for any office: helping to empower your constituents.

New York City Councilman Reed says that "In direct elective office, you're not playing an advisory role; you are really in the process of making policy." New York City School Board Member Doug Robinson agrees. "There are all these major boards that white men have created over the years. There's money and decisions being made at these high levels. If we're not there, we can't complain."

The problem, of course, is getting there. Fundamentally, many of us are intimidated by politics--its customs, and its lingo. "Just jump in there and try to learn as much as you can," advises Community College Board member Shorter. "Don't be discouraged. You'll always run up against people who

want to maintain the status quo, want to guard the old way of doing things, and are suspicious of queer people wanting to do things. Take positions of leadership. You're going to make mistakes and more than likely you will live through it."

Shorter ran unsuccessfully to maintain the San Francisco Community College Trustee seat she was appointed to mid-term. She is now an appointed member of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women.

Many persons get into politics from an advocacy position, or watchdogs of the system. "My partner and I have two children, 15 and 12 years old," School Board Member Robinson says. "I had always been on the other side as a parent advocate. The principal of my younger son's school asked me to run." New York City Councilman Reed recommends joining your block association, church association, or community advisory board. "[Then] go to the meeting; they'll tell you what to do next." Reed worked as a community activist for 20 years, then ran for his seat unsuccessfully in 1991. He prevailed when he ran again in 1997.

Robinson asserts that we should "work in the Black lesbian and gay community, but [also] work in the general community and build alliances."

Cunningham reminds us that one's "stripes" are earned in many ways. "Our communities are looking for people who are willing to serve on boards and commissions. It may not be glamorous, it may be the waste management board, but the experience you get can put you in a better position to serve on the planning commission, which would put you in a better position to run for the city commission or the city council. Be willing to give back and one of these days someone may call you to their dining room table and tell you, 'I want you to run.'"

Robinson put it plainly: to fully participate in politics -- and in life, in general -- "we have to learn to be more comfortable with ourselves and we have to be out."

The point is to get involved and see where it takes you. That's the decision BLG pioneers made in the early 1990s. They were "firsts" and stepped out on faith. In 1991, Sherry Harris made history when she won a seat on the Seattle, Washington, City Council and became the first out African-American elected to public office. A year later, Kenneth Reeves ran for the mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He made history when he won becoming the first out African American to head a major US city. Today, he is a member of the Cambridge City Council. Sabrina Sojourner joined the list of firsts when she ran for US Representative (shadow senator) for the nation's capital and won. She was the first out Black lesbian or gay person elected to public office in Washington, D.C.

The phrase is old, oft-repeated, and has been a rallying cry for every group seeking political, social, and economic respect, and our community is no different: the youth are our future. Shorter recalls that many San Franciscan Black LGBTs were "energized" and inspired to find ways to contribute when she was initially appointed, but in order to continue to do so

"Don't be discouraged. You'll always run up against people who want to maintain the status quo, want to guard the old way of doing things, and are suspicious of queer people wanting to do things. Take positions of leadership. You're going to make mistakes and more than likely you will live through it."

Sherri Harris, former City Council member from Seattle Washington, was the first out African American ever elected to public office.

"African-American LGBT and questioning, especially youth, must see their own running and appointed to positions of authority and power."

"It's very distressing to me that kids don't have role models," laments Robinson. It's important for people of color to step up to the plate and say I'm a lesbian or gay man, a role model, and can contribute to the community. Once you're out, it relieves all that burden and baggage that being in the closet does [bring]."

BLGBTGOP

by Clayton Ralph Wilson

That's Right! Log Cabin's Black Gay Republicans

For many black voters, the Republican Party brings up ominous apparitions such as: Senator Jesse Helms (NC-R) and his brand of states' rights; Justice Clarence Thomas, the conservative Supreme Justice who said it wasn't unconstitutional for prison guards to beat inmates; the religious right and its opposition to abortions; and a party adamantly against affirmative action. Nonetheless, there is growing influx of black lesbians and gays who are registering with the Grand Old Party (GOP) and who are active within it. In fact, there is now a national organization for gay and lesbian Republicans--the Log Cabin Republicans,

Making the switch from D to R represents a change from the "soft bigotry" of the Democratic Party, said one Black lesbian. And according to Leonard Green, a New York City resident, "It allows me to be around people who think the way that I think politically. It is important that African

Americans, whether gay or straight, do not allow the Democratic Party to take them for granted, which I think has happened for a long time," said Green, the publisher of a conservative magazine, The Right Angle, and a former board member of the New York City chapter of the Log Cabin.

Frustration with the Democratic Party seems to be a common theme which attracts politically motivated Black lesbians and gays to join the Log Cabin. Among Black members of the group, which has over 56 chapters throughout the US, this frustration emerged as a consistent catalyst, which resonates in their enthusiasm and allegiance to the party of Abraham Lincoln.

Vilified by some gay Democrats as 'enigmatic' and 'self-hating', many Black members are drawn to the group simply because they share and support the basic principles that form the core of GOP ideology: limited government, the promotion of individual rights, an emphasis on fiscal responsibility and a tough stand against crime.

Todd Cantwell, a Philadelphia native and computer programmer, is a Republican, but has yet to join the local Log Cabin chapter. He says that his identification with the Republican Party is stronger than with that of the gay community.

"Sure, this a complex thing," explained Cantwell. "Its impossible for me to really choose one aspect of who and what I am over another. But I know me, and my life experience has shown me that blanket support of affirmative action policies is detrimental in the long run to African-Americans. I also think that the abortion situation is out of control, particularly with young people, who take sex very casually. And personally, I support the death penalty."

He added, "My lover and I live a simple life and for us, it is easier to tolerate some Republican principles that we disagree with, that Democrats may see as regressive. I have to be true to myself and do what works for me."

Not surprising, several Black members of the Log Cabin Republicans see themselves as effecting a 'change in the debate.' As one lesbian said, "Our mere presence sometimes shakes up the room. And don't let it be several of us in one space at the same time. I think it makes a difference, if even on a small level. We also know that we can further push the party from the inside, to move to the center, which is the most important voting constituency in the country anyway."

After the cliff-hanger 2000 presidential election, there are definitely lower expectations for the George W. Bush administration. Blacks, gays and lesbians and other groups interested in progressive change are cringing at the thought of regressive social policies and the possibility of several Supreme Court appointments. The next four years are not likely to see the appointment of a lesbian or gay liaison to the homosexual community and the Bush adminstration's recent shake up of the White House's AIDS policy office, which counted over a dozen out lesbians and gays on the panel, didn't help.

"Since Blacks and gays did not support Bush in large numbers," says Greene, "they should not expect any special consideration. However, I am confident that he will be President to all the people."

"Sure, this a complex thing," explained Cantwell. "Its impossible for me to really choose one aspect of who and what I am over another. But I know me, and my life experience has shown me that blanket support of affirmative action policies is detrimental in the long run to African-Americans. I also think that the abortion situation is out of control, particularly with young people, who take sex very casually. And personally, I support the death penalty."

If your're thinking of running for public office and you're wondering if you've got what it takes . . .

Contact Brian Bond, (l), at the Victory Fund at 102 14th Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005, call (202) 842-8679 (202-VICTORY), or visit www.victoryfund.org.

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Wants You!

by Crystal H. Weston

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund -- the only national organization devoted to helping openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender candidates get elected to public office is

--celebrating its 10th year.

The Washington-D.C.-based organization provides financial assistance, media and campaign training, and access to consultants. Each state's campaign finance laws determine the allowable financial and in-kind contributions of the Victory Fund.

Executive Director, Brian Bond explains that donors also potentially help dictate which candidate may receive support. "If we are asking them to give money to a candidate in San Francisco, donors may state that there are already elected candidates in San Francisco, and say 'hey, I see [in the candidate profile we distribute] this woman is running in Wilmington, North Carolina; it must be tough for her down there, I'd rather help [her]."

The Victory Fund is nonpartisan, as are many of its candidates because they are running at the school board and other basic levels of elected office. However, among those who run on a party ticket, says Bond, 95% are Democrat, similar to the Victory Fund's donor base.

Are You Ready?

The Victory Fund supports about a quarter of the candidates who approach them through contributions that increase the candidate's budget just enough to allow them to compete. "A lot of people we feel aren't ready to run because they need more training, or [to] build a better strength within their community, or the demographics of the district [significantly lower their chances]," says Bond. Ideally, candidates should approach the Victory Fund for assistance at least a couple years in advance of running.

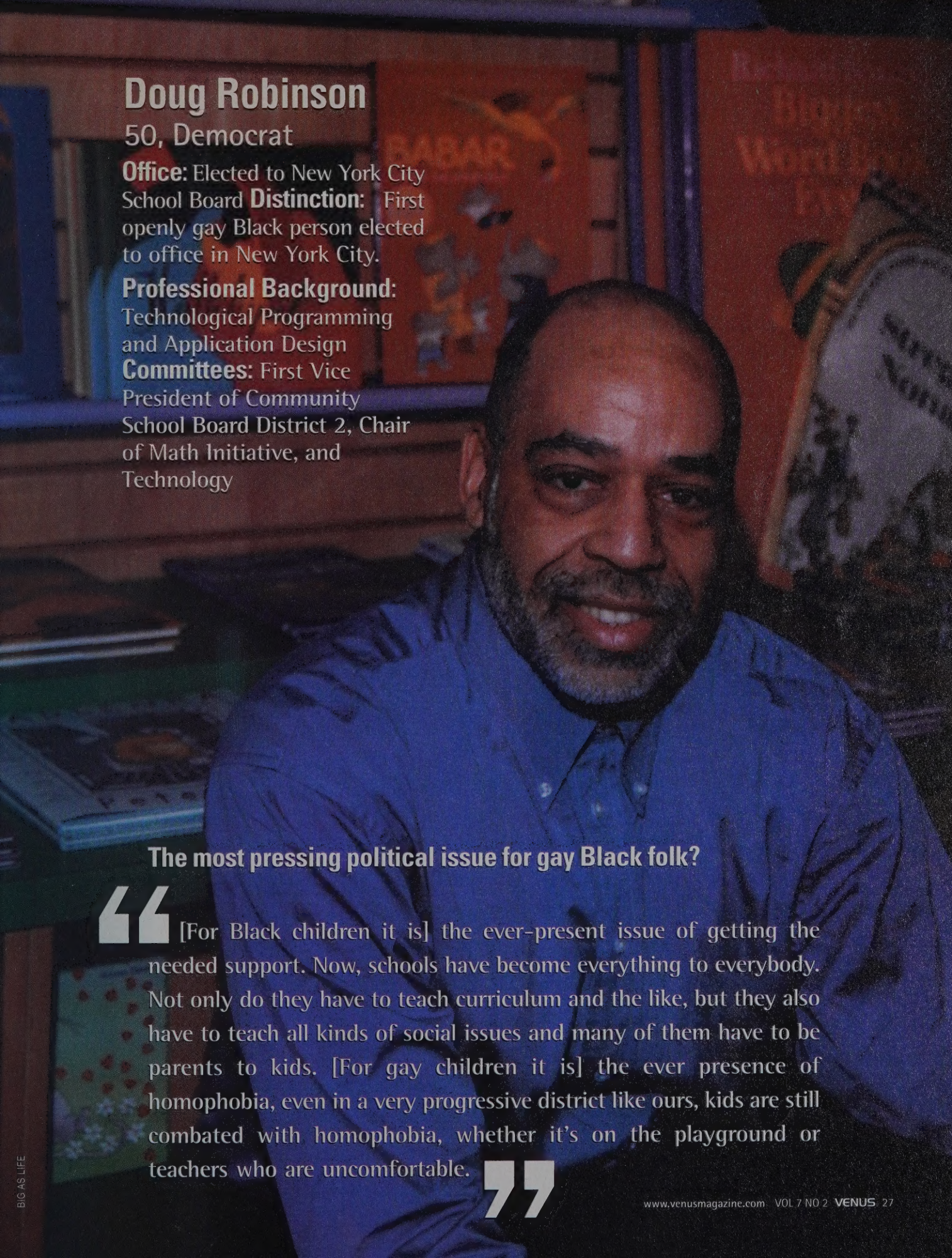
Bond candidly admits "a lot of lip service is given to [the notion of] diversity" and the Victory Fund is only recently in a better position to proactively reach out for candidates. "I need help [recruiting Black candidates]. Let's face it: I'm White [but] I come out of democratic politics and I'm not afraid to push people to run . . . I need support mechanisms to help find potential candidates and get them prepared to run; I want people in the African-American community to know that you can run and win."

Who Said That?

"It has been said that we have no visible leaders or influence, that predominantly white organizations value us only as tokens of diversity."

"Much discussion has occurred around the state of the Black LGBT community and the all but invisible role that we play in the general LGBT movement. It has been said that we have no visible leaders or influence, that predominantly white organizations value us only as tokens of diversity and that ultimately the LGBT movement is about the rights of white LGBT people--none of which is true. Its far too easy to complain that organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, NGLTF and GLAAD don't meet the needs of Black LGBT people. What is much harder and ultimately more important is building and sustaining Black LGBT organizations that are effective at both political activism and community building. Instead of spending so much of our energy criticizing others, let's spend that time developing our own organizations and institutions that will strengthen the Black LGBT community."

Michael Crawford, HRC, Regional Field Worker



Doug Robinson

50, Democrat

Office: Elected to New York City School Board **Distinction:** First openly gay Black person elected to office in New York City.

Professional Background: Technological Programming and Application Design

Committees: First Vice President of Community School Board District 2, Chair of Math Initiative, and Technology

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

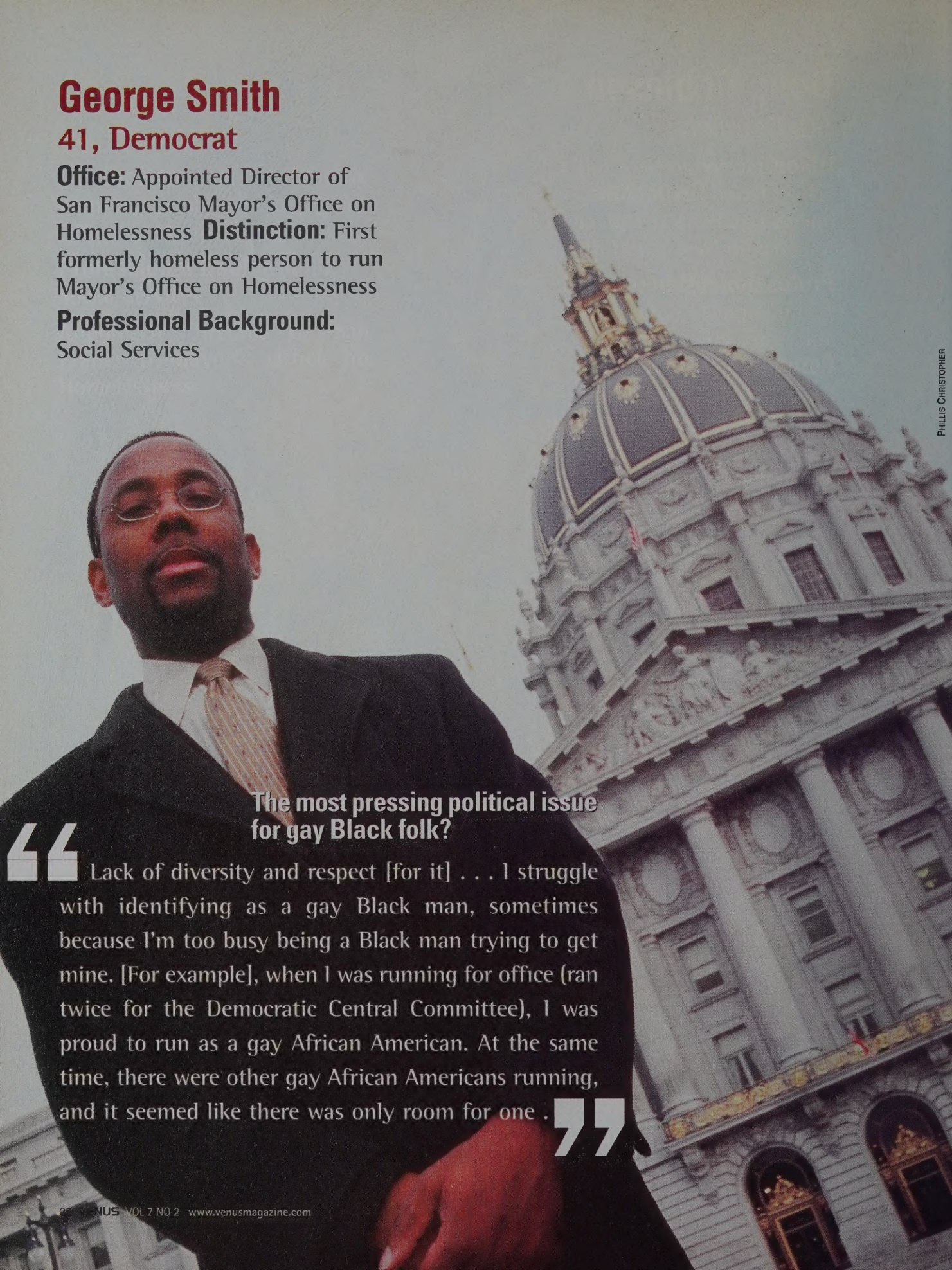
"[For Black children it is] the ever-present issue of getting the needed support. Now, schools have become everything to everybody. Not only do they have to teach curriculum and the like, but they also have to teach all kinds of social issues and many of them have to be parents to kids. [For gay children it is] the ever presence of homophobia, even in a very progressive district like ours, kids are still combated with homophobia, whether it's on the playground or teachers who are uncomfortable."

George Smith

41, Democrat

Office: Appointed Director of San Francisco Mayor's Office on Homelessness **Distinction:** First formerly homeless person to run Mayor's Office on Homelessness

Professional Background: Social Services



PHILLIS CHRISTOPHER

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Lack of diversity and respect [for it] . . . I struggle with identifying as a gay Black man, sometimes because I'm too busy being a Black man trying to get mine. [For example], when I was running for office (ran twice for the Democratic Central Committee), I was proud to run as a gay African American. At the same time, there were other gay African Americans running, and it seemed like there was only room for one."

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Or call (202) 628-4160 and ask for Human Resources.

20 QUESTIONS!

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

1. Age: ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ over 65

2. Ethnic Identification: ☐ African-American ☐ Caribbean ☐ African ☐ Latina/o ☐ Multicultural ☐ Non Black

3. Annual Household Income:
   ☐ under 20,000 ☐ 20,000-39,999 ☐ 40,000–59,999 ☐ 60,000–79,999
   ☐ 80,000–99,999 ☐ 100,000–159,999 ☐ over 160,000

4. Which of the following best describes your household's primary residence? (PLEASE "X" ONE.)
   ☐ Own a house ☐ Rent a house ☐ Own a co-op
   ☐ Own a condominium ☐ Rent an apartment ☐ Other_____

5. Gender Identification: ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. Highest Educational Level:
   ☐ Some high school ☐ Undergraduate degree ☐ Doctorate degree
   ☐ Some college ☐ Masters degree ☐ Masters/Doctorate student

READING AND USING VENUS

7. How many of the last issues of Venus have you or other members of your household actually read?
   ☐ 4 out of 4 ☐ 3 out of 4 ☐ 2 out of 4 ☐ 1 out of 4

8. Which of the following do you or other members of your household recall doing as a result of reading VENUS Magazine? (PLEASE "X" ALL THAT APPLY)
   ☐ Used travel information ☐ Purchased product or service advertised
   ☐ Kept a book review ☐ Kept issue with ad for reference
   ☐ Used conference, entertainment info ☐ Used the classified section

PERSONAL ATTITUDE

9. Which of the following statements BEST describes your personality? (PLEASE "X" ONLY ONE)
   ☐ "I consider myself bold, daring, adventurous and courageous."
   ☐ "I like to do things that are unconventional."
   ☐ "I'm always seeking new ways to express myself."
   ☐ "I consider myself a trendsetter."
   ☐ "I consider myself a person who thinks indepedently."

AUTOMOBILE PURCHASE PLANS

10. Do you or other members of your household plan to purchase or lease a domestic or import vehicle in the next 12 months?
    Plan to buy/lease a domestic vehicle in 12 mos. ☐ Yes ☐ No
    Plan to buy/lease an import vehicle in 12 mos. ☐ Yes ☐ No

INTERNET PURCHASES

11. In the past 12 months did you or any other household members make any purchases through the internet?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

Complete VENUS MAGAZINE'S Readership Survey Today & Win!

TOBACCO CONSUMPTION

12. Are you or any one in your household a current smoker?
☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How many cigarettes do you, yourself smoke per day?
☐ None ☐ 5 or less ☐ 6–10 ☐ 11–15 ☐ 16–20 ☐ 20 or more

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION

14. Do you or anyone in your household consume alcoholic beverages?
☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Which is your alcoholic beverage of choice?
☐ vodka ☐ gin ☐ cognac ☐ whiskey ☐ tequila ☐ rum ☐ wine

16. Which types of beer do you, yourself most prefer?
☐ Domestic ☐ Imported ☐ None

17. When ordering liquor at restaurants or clubs, which do you, yourself most prefer?
☐ Premium brand ☐ House brand

PRODUCT OWNERSHIP/PURCHASE INTENTIONS

18. Which of the following products do you or other members of your household currently own or plan to purchase in the next 12 months ? (PLEASE "X" ALL THAT APPLY.)

Computer equipment/software
- Personal Computer (PC) ☐
- Laptop computer ☐

Communications Devices:
- Cellular phone ☐
- Pager/beeper ☐
- MP3 ☐
- Palm organizer ☐

Audio/Video equipment:
- Compact disc (CD) player ☐
- Camcorder/video camera ☐
- Digital camera ☐

Membership to Fitness Facility:
- 5 year membership ☐
- 2 year membership ☐
- 1 year or less membership ☐
- Membership associated with work ☐

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

WHY? ITS IMPORTANT TO THE GROWTH OF THIS PUBLICATION. ADVERTISERS WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK AND DO.

HOW? ANSWER EACH QUESTION, TEAR OUT OR PHOTO COPY AND MAIL TO: **VENUS MAGAZINE, READERSHIP SURVEY, P. O. BOX 150 HASTINGS ON HUDSON, NY 10706 OR FAX TO 914-376-4441**

WHEN? THE SOONER, THE BETTER! EACH SURVEY POST MARKED BY APRIL 30, 2001 WILL **QUALIFY TO WIN** ROUND TRIP AIRFARE TO WASHINGTON, D. C. FOR BLACK GAY PRIDE!

WE HAVE NOT ASKED FOR YOUR NAME IN THE SURVEY, HOWEVER TO QUALIFY FOR THE PRIZE, PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE AN ADDRESS CARD WHEN RETURNING YOUR SUBMISSION. ONE SURVEY PER PERSON. DUPLICATES WILL BE ELIMINATED.

Entertainment

19. How often do you or members of your household enjoy the following:

Purchasing Music CDs	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend a Live Concert	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend a Movie	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend Live Theatre	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐

Travel

20. Do you, yourself, have a valid Passport? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Been on Cruise a inthe last 24 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Traveled Outside the U.S. in the last 24 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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July 21st & 22nd, 2001

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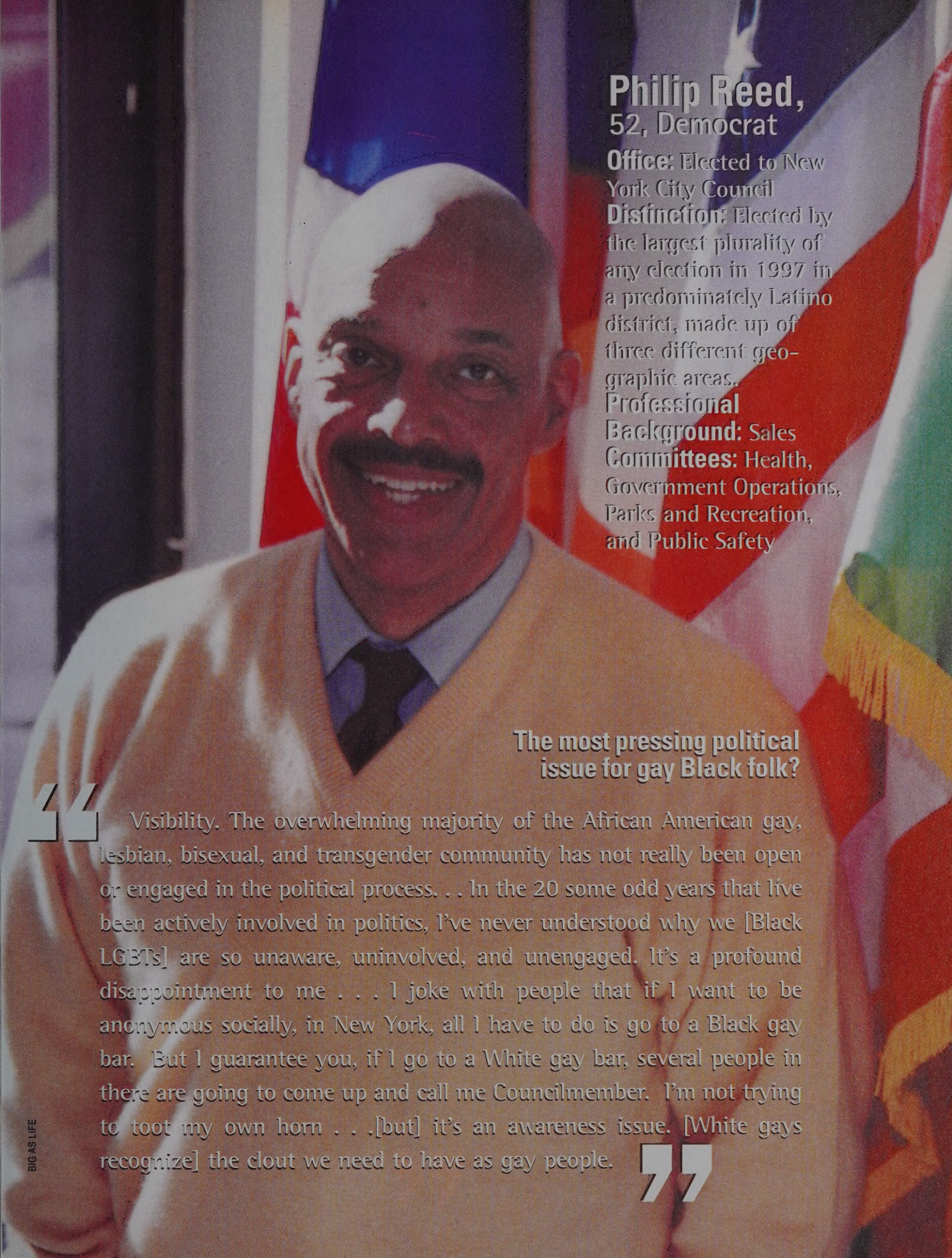


Philip Reed,
52, Democrat

Office: Elected to New York City Council

Distinction: Elected by the largest plurality of any election in 1997 in a predominately Latino district, made up of three different geographic areas.

Professional Background: Sales

Committees: Health, Government Operations, Parks and Recreation, and Public Safety

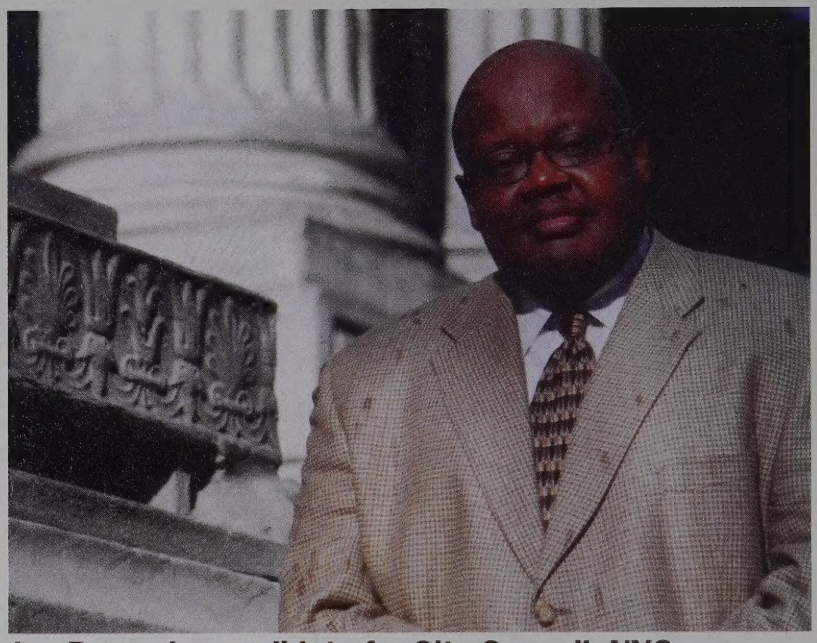
The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Visibility. The overwhelming majority of the African American gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community has not really been open or engaged in the political process. . . In the 20 some odd years that I've been actively involved in politics, I've never understood why we [Black LGBTs] are so unaware, uninvolved, and unengaged. It's a profound disappointment to me . . . I joke with people that if I want to be anonymous socially, in New York, all I have to do is go to a Black gay bar. But I guarantee you, if I go to a White gay bar, several people in there are going to come up and call me Councilmember. I'm not trying to toot my own horn . . .[but] it's an awareness issue. [White gays recognize] the clout we need to have as gay people."

Political Pie

by Crystal H. Weston

Ingredients: Officials, Candidates, Aides, Donors, Constituents, Consultants, and Volunteers!



BIG AS LIFE

Joe Pressely, candidate for City Council, NYC.

A Tablespoon of Candidate

In Brooklyn, 37 year-old Joey B. Pressley, former Executive Director of Gay Men of African Descent, recently announced his foray into the race for New York's 35th Council District. "I am so excited about this race; to become the first openly Black gay elected official in Brooklyn would be tremendous."

Despite his optimism, he is disheartened by nay-sayers, "When I hear people say, 'Well, why do you want to do that?' What I hear [them really saying] is 'why do you want to be so out?' I have as much right as anyone else to run for City Council. It's about building a new world and making sure we all have a say in how our communities are developed and serviced."

A Dash of Consultant

In Oakland, California 33 year-old Darrel Lamont Carey worked four years in local government. He realized he'd successfully gotten many candidates elected "on the side" and decided to go into business for himself. Two and a half years later his political consulting firm continues to help candidates get elected to office. "I'm the bully," says Carey, "When I deal with my candidates, it is a one-to-one relationship. Together we plan the overall rules of the campaign: finance, the ground operation, and the public relations campaign."

He takes pride in his community-based approached to running campaigns, hence the moniker Grassroots Engineer. "We actually get out to the neighborhoods, pull people together [for] focus groups and plan house parties. I know community people, not just the poobahs downtown."

"When I hear people say, 'Well, why do you want to do that?' What I hear [them really saying] is 'why do you want to be so out?"

A Cup of Aide

"My role is to be able to give her information that she needs to make an effective decision, says Michael O'Connor, Legislative Aide to Illinois State Representative Constance Howard.

A long time Chicago community activist who got his start during his youth tagging along with his aunt who was a precinct captain in democratic politics, O'Connor recognizes the dual benefit of his political position and uses it to bring awareness about Black LGBT communities to policy makers. "When people know my sexual orientation and are discussing policy, they tend to be a lot more inclusive in their strategies for solutions. The advantages of being a gay man are that I have a unique perspective that I can bring to the table about outreach to the entire Black community."

Andrea D. Shorter
35, Democrat

Office: Appointed to San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women **Distinction:** Only African-American lesbian or gay in an elected seat in San Francisco in 1996 when appointed Trustee to San Francisco Community College District **Professional Background:** Criminal and Juvenile Justice Advocacy **Committees:** Chair of Girls Issues and Safety

PHYLLIS CHRISTOPHER

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Not depending on the predominate leadership in the lesbian and gay community to give voice to our concerns. It's not only unfair to us, it's unfair to place that expectation on other people. That's part of our political maturity, and part of our claiming our own voice. San Francisco has had a tradition [of lesbian and gay leadership] for the last couple of decades and it has been predominately White, not minority driven. Trying to carve out a position in that leadership had its challenges, but overall people were accepting [of the fact] that a Black lesbian had a voice."

TestDrive

by Rod Monteiro

Pay Attention. There WILL be a quiz after this section. We've cruised all the auto shows and came up with these beauties for your 2001 car shopping spree. Go file that tax return, then go for a ride!

Kia Sportage Climb Mt. Everest!

How would you like an SUV able to climb Mt. Everest? Well, you can't have one. What you can have, however, is the next best thing, the Kia Sportage SUV. This affordable and luxurious SUV has 130 horsepower 16-valve dual-overhead-cam engine and double-wishbone front suspension making mountain driving seem like a ride in the park. Its interior has 125.7 cubic feet, enough stor-

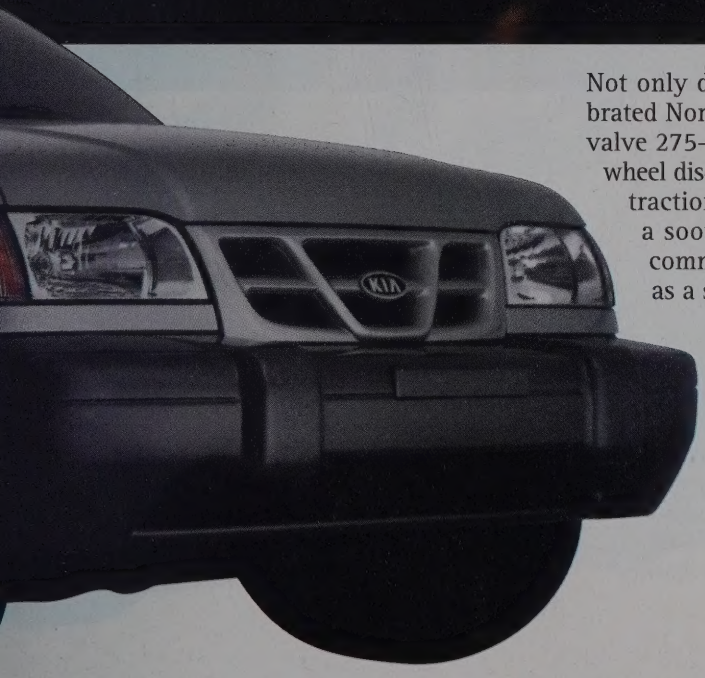
age for your entire family and dual front airbags. Its 6 high-tech speakers will keep you rocking steady. Available in a 4-door model or a 2-door convertible model, it comes with a polished stainless-steel rear sports bar to hang your towel at the beach.

Mercedes. Unmatched Comfort

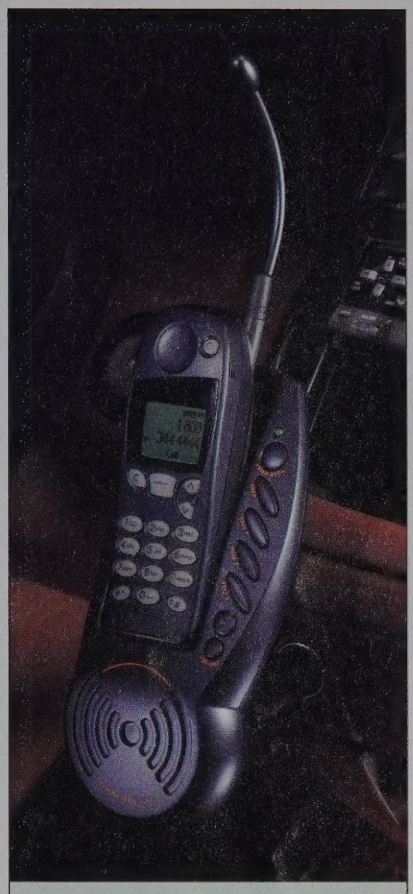
The efficiency, beauty and luxury of the Mercedes E-Class remains unrivaled in craftsmanship, versatility, power, and of course, sensual, timeless beauty. Equipped with leather interior, dual-zone climate control, an 8-speaker audio system, dual air bags, and EPS traction and stability control.

Cadillac DeVille Arrive in Style!

The Cadillac DeVille brings together the technology of the twenty-first century with the style and elegance that is the hallmark of the Cadillac.



Not only does it contain the celebrated Northstar System and a 32-valve 275-hp V8 engine, but four-wheel disc brakes and an all-speed traction control system. Enjoy a soothing massage on your commute from work, as well as a six-disc CD changer and power sunroof. It also boasts a top-of-the-line infrared Night Vision, which displays an image of objects ahead right on your windshield.



Hands-Free Cell Phone Kit

Cellular phones have made commute time more productive, but driving with one hand can be dangerous. Now you can turn your cell phone into a car speaker phone and drive safer, with both hands free to steer, shift and signal. This cell-phone cradle plugs into your car's lighter socket and is powered by your car's battery. It features a microphone, speaker and volume control so you can hear and be heard in the heaviest traffic. Continuously charges the phone's battery; sophisticated circuitry conserves energy. It's designed for the most popular phones made by Motorola and Nokia and comes with an extension for SUV dashboards.

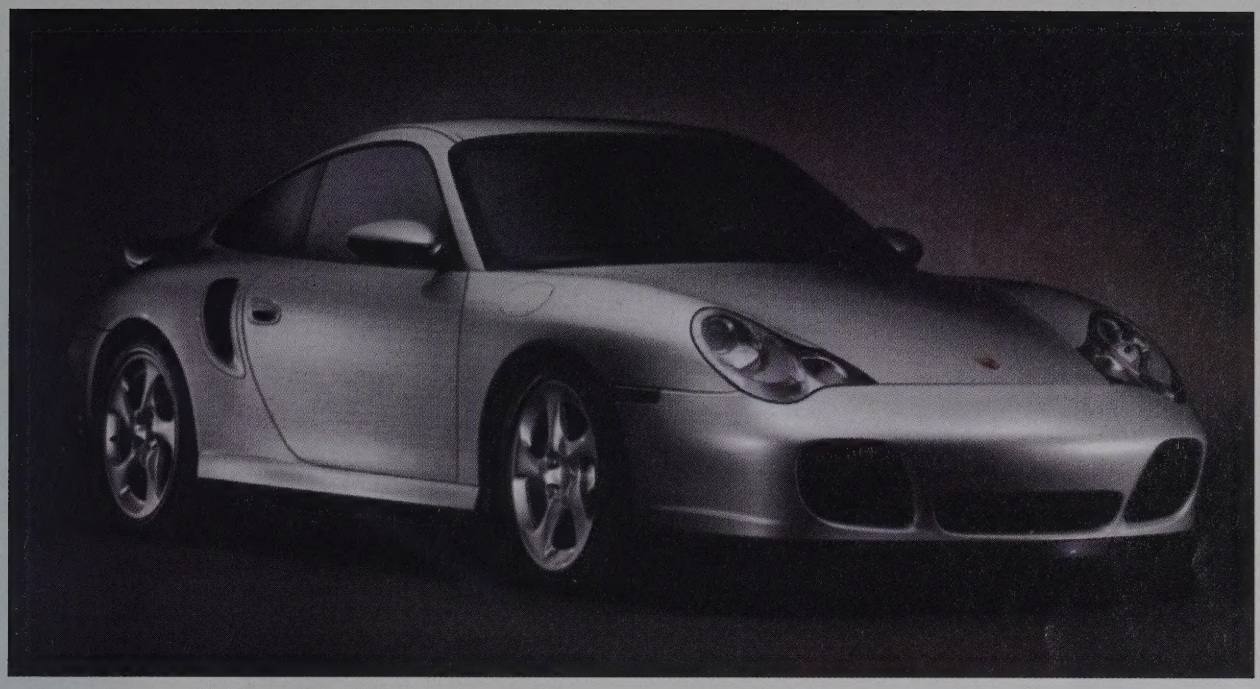
O.K.! It's time for your Quiz! Which of these 2001 models provides the "Vehicle Dynamics Control System" for unparalleld traction? Times up!

Subaru Outback Luxury in the Rough!

The Subaru Outback H6-3.0 VDC, larger and more versatile than previous models, offers exceptional driving performance and luxury. The Vehicle Dynamics Control System provides unparalleled traction and stability for driving through even the roughest terrain along with raised suspension for excellent ground clearance handling. The interior includes leather-trimmed upholstery and steering wheel, sunroof and AM/FM/Weatherband stereo cassette and single-disc CD player.

BMW The Driving Machine

Unless you've experienced the handling of the BMW, you cannot say that



you've experienced the ultimate. It's one of the most affordable luxury cars on the road, and one of the safest to drive. It contains a unique Head Protection System that helps reduce head injuries in collisions, All-Season Traction that allows you to drive in any weather condition, and Dynamic Stability Control for road-holding. Redesigned in the futuristic look of today the BMW 725i still maintains its legendary look and efficiency.

911 Turbo Porsche Don't Get Left Behind!

You're driving along, and suddenly the sleek, silvery glint of a Porsche speeds by like a bullet, the engine roaring like a panther. Few other cars have come to symbolize luxury and speed as well as the 911 Turbo Porsche. This year, realize that dream of having the most desired speed luxury automobile. Its twin turbochargers and water-cooled 3.6-liter flat-six engine and five-speed Tiptronic S transmission leave competitors behind. Its internally vented, cross-drilled brakes brings you to a standstill in 2.6 seconds. Hey, it's a Porsche. Enough said. V

Watch It!

FUBU has teamed up with Wittnauer International, the nation's oldest watchmaker to introduce The FUBU Swiss watch collection. The line offers a variety of styles for men and women including "Azure" the ultimate dress watch featuring stainless or gold bracelet and a mother of pearl, white or blue dial; "Buenos Aries" a gold-plated stainless steel or two-toned bracelet. The top of the line "Clous De Paris" dials with an optional diamond bezel. Other styles feature white or black textured dial with or without chronograph, Swiss automatic movement, power reserve, water resistance deployment clasp, three hand movement, date indicator, calendar and alarm.

Foot Discretions

Sharper Image Design's sophisticated new foot massager uses patented technology to silently circulate ion-rich air through openings under your toes. This cooling, drying breeze combined with soothing massage – offers wonderful relief for hot, tired, aching feet that are burning up with moist itching. The Foot Care Station turns on automatically when you rest your feet on the ergonomic massage nodes. Discreet, attractive and low profile, it fits anywhere – even under an office desk.

Quiet Power

72 of your ties glide quietly past you for easy selection. Touch the control bar to rotate left or right in one full revolution or press the Stop button when you've reached your selection. A bright light helps you see true colors, then switches off after rotation stops. Four double hooks underneath hold belts and scarves increasing the hanging spaces to 80.

Keep Pressing

A day's wear is all it takes to lose the look of crisp slacks – just back, freshly pressed, from the dry cleaners. Baggy knees and wrinkled rear? Oh, Hell No! Now you can forget the expense and inconvenience of constant trips to the cleaners. Instead, just plug in this English-made valet and press a button to give your pants a professional-style press – automatically – anytime you want. An exclusive stretcher bar system eases fabric back into shape, and thermostatically controlled heat loosens stubborn wrinkles.

The Pleasure of Business

Images: DeAlan Wilson
www.dealanphoto.com

Styling: Jerry Jordan-Brown
Hair/Make-up: Gerard Dure' for Gerard Dure' Salons
Models: Andrea Gould & David Randolph for 123 Entertainment Models & Talent Mgt.
Interior design: Jack Faxon

Andrea wears black crepe knit suit by Anne Klein $500. Camisole by Banana Republic $40. David wears blue suit courtesy Skylab by Drew Felton with Banana Republic tie $395.00.

David's white cotton shirt by Yves St. Laurent $60.00 with gray pants courtesy Skylab by Drew Felton & Banana Republic tie $39.50. Andrea sports a two piece suit by Scott Pollard $450.00 with polkadot blouse by HftM $15.00.

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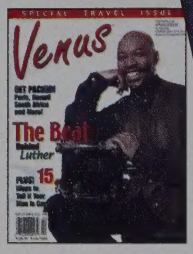

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Ruth Ellis at 100

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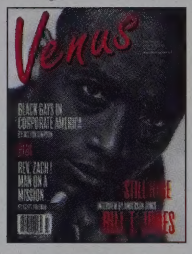
Violence



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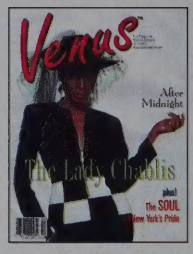

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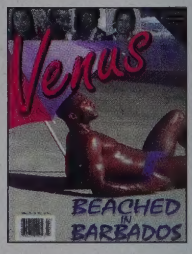
After Midnight



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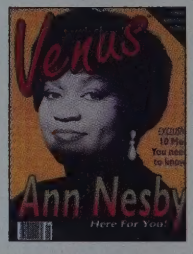
Barbados



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Andrea's brown tweed jacket by H&M $75.00 with plaid skirt by Scott Pollard $75.00 and blouse by Scott Pollard $50.00. David wears Skylab by Drew Felton with Banana Republic Tie $39.50

Madame Tussaud's New York Opens At Times Square

Barbara Lazaroff, Karem Abdul-Jabbr, Huey, Maya Angelou, and Donald Trump at Madame Tussaud's New York grand opening.

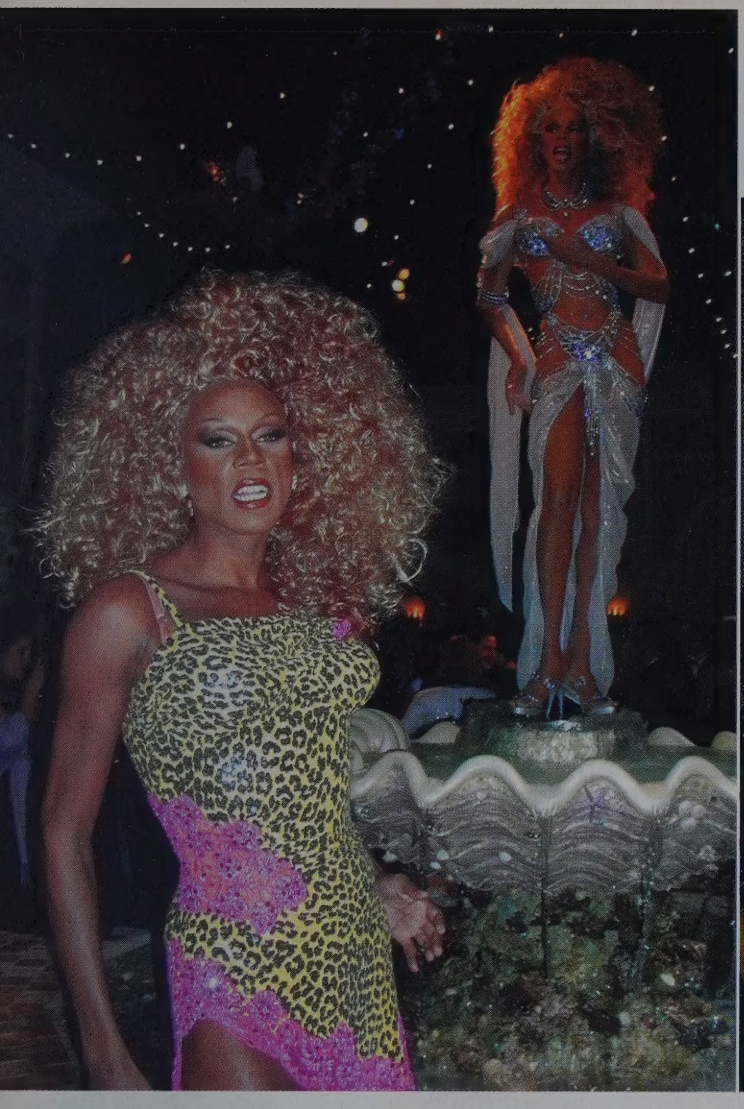
Madame Tussaud's New York is an impressive $50 million, 85,000 square foot, five-story interactive wax museum. Developed by London-based The Tussaud's Group, Ltd., it showcases remarkable wax likenesses of numerous celebrities whose names and faces are synonymous with New York, in addition to an impressive collection of the world's most reputed film, television, music, political, social, historical and sports celebrities.

Following in the footsteps of the original Madame Tussaud's in London, there are no velvet ropes separating guests from the figures at Madame Tussaud's New York. Visitors enjoy a rare opportunity to interact with the famous as they mingle and pose for photographs with their favorite celebrities. Like other Madame Tussaud's attractions, Madame Tussaud's New York also takes on the "face of the place," presenting personalities who are synonymous with New York, in addition to those of worldwide fame. Notable New Yorkers included in the attraction are Woody Allen, Leonard Bernstein, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, John D. Rockefeller, Yoko Ono, Donald Trump, Andy Warhol, and RuPaul, among others.

Madame Tussaud's New York's striking exterior on 42nd Street, between 7th and 8th Avenues, sets the tone for the exciting experience that waits inside. The ten-story building is vibrant with color and dynamic in design. From the rooftop, a giant hand reaches out above the crowds, presenting from its fingertips a vertical Madame Tussaud's marquee that spans four stories. A glass-enclosed viewing platform, over an inviting atrium-style entrance allows the guests inside to enjoy the excitement of 42nd Street from two stories above.

Once inside, a stroll through Madame Tussaud's New York takes guests to "The Opening Night Party," an elaborate Italian baroque garden party already underway. Wax portraits of New York notables are gathered in eclectic combinations, waiting for

Photography by Tina Paul



RuPaul 'Works It ' for his admirers, live and in wax. (r) Ivana Trump, Patrick Stewart, Evander Holyfield, and Liz Smith were also on hand..

Broadway reviews and sharing the latest gossip with everyone from Brad Pitt, Bette Midler, Nicolas Cage and Hugh Grant, to Oprah Winfrey, John Travolta, Cybill Shepherd and Meryl Streep.

From the party, guests are taken back in time to the 18th century to learn "Madame Tussaud's Story," a 200-year history that depicts scenes from the French Revolution, the beheading of Marie Antoinette, and Napoleon's lover Josephine in prison.

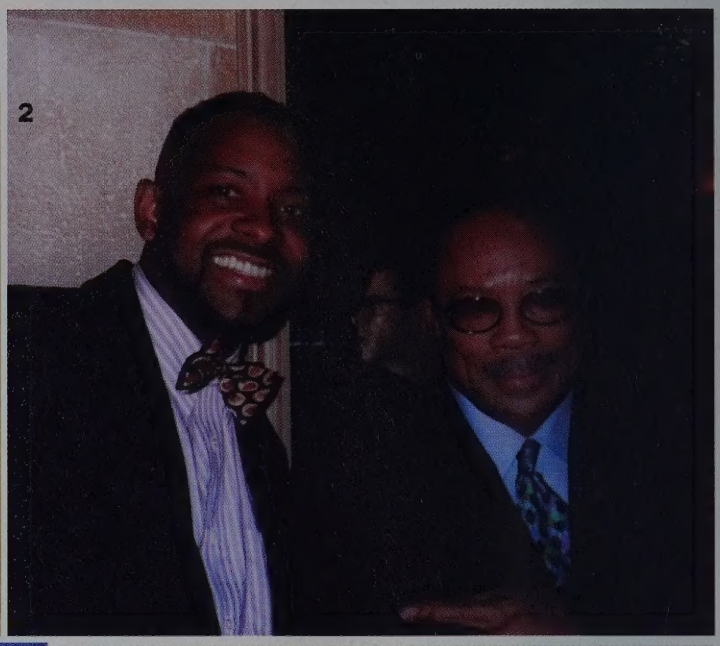
After a look into the past, guests go "Behind the Scenes" to learn the art of wax modeling, following the creation of Al Roker's clay likeness. This multimedia display features photos, video and equipment that demonstrate the painstaking methods and step-by-step processes used to create a wax portrait.

"The Gallery" puts guests face-to-face with some of the world's greatest leaders, including a showcase of American presidents and other honored and distinguished people whose lives and achievements have had a dramatic impact on our world. Portraits of The Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Diana, Princess of Wales, are presented.

Next, visitors travel through time in "Popular Culture," which chronicles the key cultural influences through the decades and includes such trendsetters as Babe Ruth, Madonna, Bill Gates, Neil Armstrong and Frank Sinatra, all presented in decade-specific vignettes.

An additional attraction at Madame 'Tussaud's New York, "1t Happened in New York" is an immersive domed attraction which takes guests on a magical midnight ride via a virtual Hansom cab to experience major events and moments which celebrate the city's illustrious history.

Open daily, admission to the Madame Tussaud's combined experience (including the wax museum and "It Happened in New York") is $19.95 for adults and children over 12. More information may be obtained online at www.madame-tussauds.com. _CEC V



Reebok
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Foundation for Cancer Research

Soultry Sisters

Kathy, Debbie, and Kim Sledge of Sister Sledge, add a triple touch of glamour to the G&P Foundation Gala in New Yor last fall.

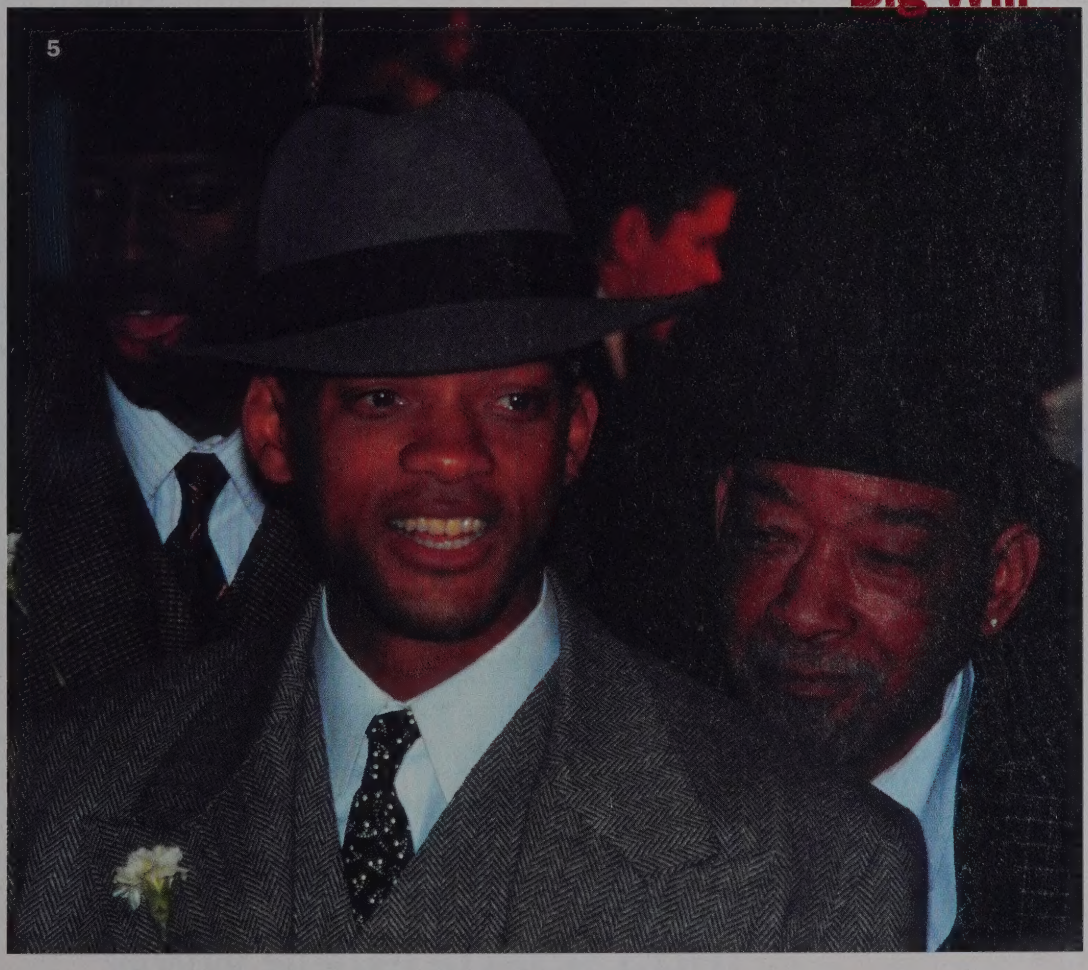
Dazzling classic R&B trio, Kathy, Debbie, and Kim Sledge, Sister Sledge, were among guests invited to honor Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordon, Mikhail Gorbachev and Sir Paul McCartney at the G&P Foundation's gala in New York City last fall. The Sisters are currently touring the UK and the US giving incredible performances which include their unforgettable 1# hit "We Are Family." The group will soon release their first Gospel CD. Sister Joni is busy launching a new television network and preparing to tour with a play that was inspired by a song Joni wrote entitled "Brother Brother Stop." Kathy is working with Crystal Waters on an upcoming dance single. If staying busy keeps you young, these ladies may live for ever!

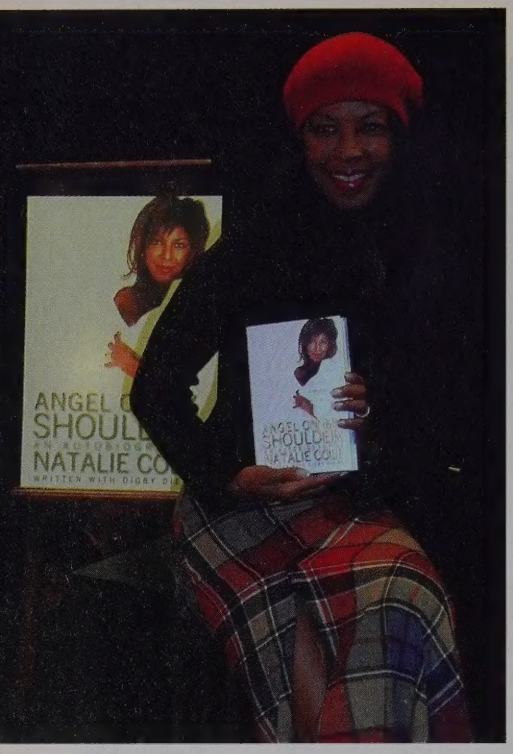
- Nigel Jackson

Big Will

Photography by Tina Paul

1. The harmonious trinity, Fate, exudes a radiant glow at the Michael Awards in NYC.
2. Radio personality, Chaz, moves in for a close-up with Quincy Jones at the Lena Horne Awards.
3. Tennis Queen, Venus Williams, decides which NIKE shoe to wear first, now that she's landed the highest paid sport endorsement contract ever by a woman.
4. Star Jones is a symphony in red at The Angel Ball.
5. The debonair Will Smith and his dad are a sartorial delight at the world premier of his latest film, "The Legend of Baggar Vance."





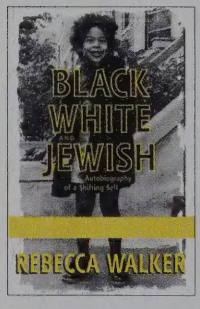
Natalie Cole stopped by a local New York City bookstore to autograph copies of "An Angel on My shoulder: An autobiography of Natlie Cole".

"Walker compares her experiences to the classic film, Imitation of Life. The spectrum of events that shaped her youth reveals her relationship with her family."

Black White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self

by Rebecca Walker, Riverhead Books, ISBN: 1-572322-169-4
Review by Maurice Patterson

Rebecca Walker has meticulously combed her life and honestly recounts it in *Black White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self.* Born to a Jewish father and black mother, she fought breathlessly to find a sense of self as a biracial youth. Her ever-evolving quest has been a wanderlust to satisfy the desires of her soul.



Like an expert cartographer, Walker has vividly mapped out her life. After her parents separated, her nomadic youth led her across cities and towns where she occasionally found residence with relatives and loved ones. However, life became increasingly chaotic with no stable home and did little to establish her identity. Walker compares her experiences to the classic film, *Imitation of Life.* The spectrum of events that shaped her youth reveals her relationship with her family and the self she tried to cohere in an ever-changing world.

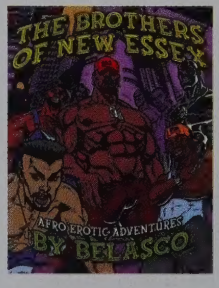
Walker describes the period when her mother, the novelist Alice Walker's nascent career began to blossom as a time of limited togetherness. At this time, her father was also busy with his practice as a lawyer--and a new white wife. In this personal time, Walker reveals intimate details, including the painful reality of having an abortion at fourteen. She is equally honest about her experiences with boys and the feelings and thoughts she treasured for girls.

The enigmas of self and identity are still real and poignant today. But Walker moves on despite the tribulations of her life. Her broken chrysalis has revealed the beauty of a breathtaking metamorphosis.

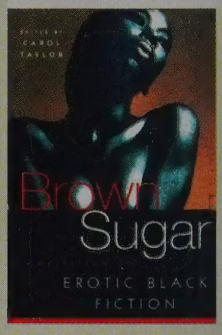
The Brothers of New Essex

by Belasco, Cleis Press, ISBN: 1-57344-111-2

In the edgy, fantasy city of New Essex, beautiful. muscular Black men flirt and have sex with each other. *The Brothers of New Essex* is Belasco's first book-sized collection of his erotic comics. Part of what he has done is created two recurring characters who are prominently featured in Brothers; Boo, a strong, silent man of mystery and Oasis, a trash-talking college student who strips to pay the bills. In the first of the Boo series, created for the now defunct GBM magazine, Boo seduces a young man out of church, then has sex with him just under one of its windows as the choir is singing. "That's as taboo as one can get," say Graylin Thornton, who was GBM's edior. In an interview with the San Francisco Frontier, Belsco abmits being excited about having his work more widely available than his self-published 'zines and magazine work but is less enthusiatic about the prospect of giving up his privacy. "Once you start publishing, you get an addiction," he says. "I'm kind of apprehensive. I like being anonymous."



Brown Sugar
A Collection of Erotic Black Fiction



Edited by Carol Taylor
Plume
ISBN: 0452282241

This stylish anthology of original black erotica, edited by long time publishing professional, Carol Taylor, includes stories by nineteen authors including poet Sapphire, Reginald Harris, Pamela Sneed, Marcia Blackman, and Leone Ross's "Drag," whose 18-year-old narrator announces, "Today I feel like a drag queen," and proceeds to pick up a man outside a porn shop and ask him to have sex with her "like I'm a boy."

TINA PAUL

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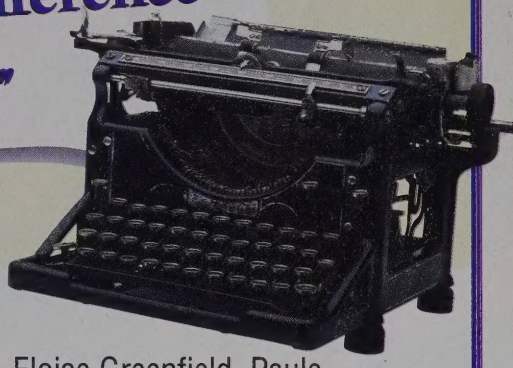

✱ Invited Speakers Include:

Penny Mickleberry, Dione Brand, Gayle Porter, Marilyn Gaston, Eloise Greenfield, Paule Marshall, Lisa Moore, bell hooks, Beverely East, Zadie Smith, Patricia Elam, Liani Mataka, Julianne Malveaux, Rebecca Walker, Octavia Butler, Shireen Lewis, Renita Weems, Valerie Jean, Debrena Jackson Gandy, Tina Ansa, Sandra Jackson-Opoku, Bertice Berry, r. erica doyle, and others.

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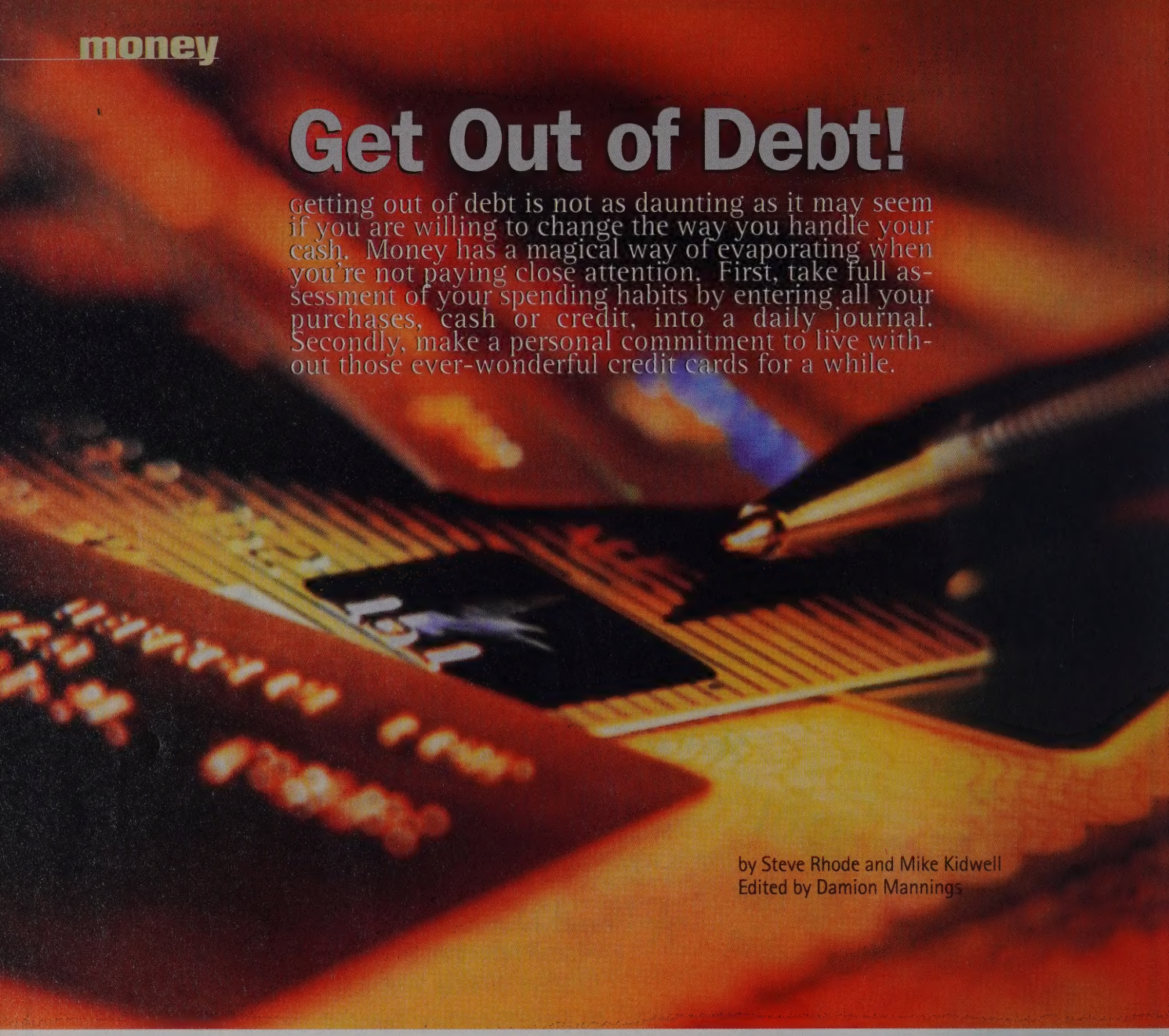
Get Out of Debt!

Getting out of debt is not as daunting as it may seem if you are willing to change the way you handle your cash. Money has a magical way of evaporating when you're not paying close attention. First, take full assessment of your spending habits by entering all your purchases, cash or credit, into a daily journal. Secondly, make a personal commitment to live without those ever-wonderful credit cards for a while.



by Steve Rhode and Mike Kidwell
Edited by Damion Mannings

As you continue to pay off credit balances, remember to never pay only the minimum balance unless, of course, you enjoy accruing additional interest charges. Third, reevaluate your budget. It may be time to create a new 'stream-line' version eliminating a few luxury expenditures until a financial goal is reached. For example, no new clothing until Master Card is paid down to $"X". This will effectively motivate you pay down your debts as you continue to window shop for your next Killer outfit. Always arrange a schedule so that creditors receive your payments on time. If you fall behind, don't fret and don't be embarrassed to get help. There are many non-profit organizations that can get you back on track. Prior to calling, make a list of all your creditors and the amount you owe, including interest rates and late fees. Once you've committed to their program, don't forget to request monthly statements. You definitely want to be sure your balances are being paid in accordance to the agreement. Gradually, you'll be on a better path to financial freedom.

Q: I am seriously considering bankruptcy due to heavy credit card debts. My partner is urging me to file bankruptcy, but I am reluctant. How can I contact these credit card companies myself to negotiate reduced interest payments before I decide to take the final step and file? Can I do it on my own?

A: It can be difficult to negotiate reduced payments and interest on your own. Creditors are afraid that if they give you lower payments, other creditors may insist on full payments and get more of your money! That's why it is best to work with a non-profit counseling agency. These agencies have agreements with creditors to reduce payments, interest and/or fees, and creditors know that their payments will be distributed fairly. If you only have one or two creditors to negotiate with, you may have success on your own. A couple of warnings are in order, though: Get any agreements in writing, and understand that even if you make the new lower payments on time, you may be reported as late to the credit reporting agencies. If your new minimum monthly payment is less that 90% of your regular payment it will not prevent your account from becoming further past due each month. Once your credit card account become 180 past due the creditor may charge off your account, but can continue collections activity. Also, if you settle a debtor for less than you owe, the IRS may consider the amount that is forgiven to be income, and will expect you to pay income tax on it.

Q: My husband and I filed for bankruptcy two years ago. When my sister recently got a copy of her credit report for herself, my bankruptcy was listed as hers. (She never filed for bankruptcy). I am not happy that she got that information, and am wondering what liability the credit reporting agency has, as this is something that I consider confidential.

A: Before you react aggressively consider these facts, if your sister has a name which is similar to yours, it may not be unreasonable that the information was reported incorrectly. Additionally, if you had any joint accounts with your sister which were included in the bankruptcy, that might cause the bankruptcy to appear on her credit report. Under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), credit reporting agencies are required to establish "reasonable procedures to ensure accuracy." But as you've learned, mistakes happen, and sometimes they can be serious. You should file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, Credit Practices Division, Washington DC 20580. Your only recourse, however, would be to sue the credit reporting agency. We have to warn you: these suits are often difficult, expensive and hard to win. Cases have gone both ways on these issues.

Generally, a consumer can sue an agency for either "willfully" or "negligently" failing to comply with the law. In the case of willful noncompliance, you can sue for an amount equal to actual damages (between $100 and $1,000), attorney's fees and punitive damages. But you have to show that the credit bureau willfully failed to comply with the law.

In the case of negligent noncompliance, you can sue only for actual damages plus attorney's fees. These types of lawsuits aim to show that credit bureaus don't have reasonable procedures in place to ensure compliance with the law, or that an employee fails to follow them.

Consumers who have filed for bankruptcy tell us that they often fear their friends, families or employers will find out about it. As you've learned, it's possible they will.

Do you have a question about credit or debt? Send it to: Myvesta.org Questions, P.O. Box 8587, Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8587 or by e-mail to: questions@myvesta.org. Steve Rhode is autor of *Out Of Debt: Smart Solutions To Your Money Problems.*

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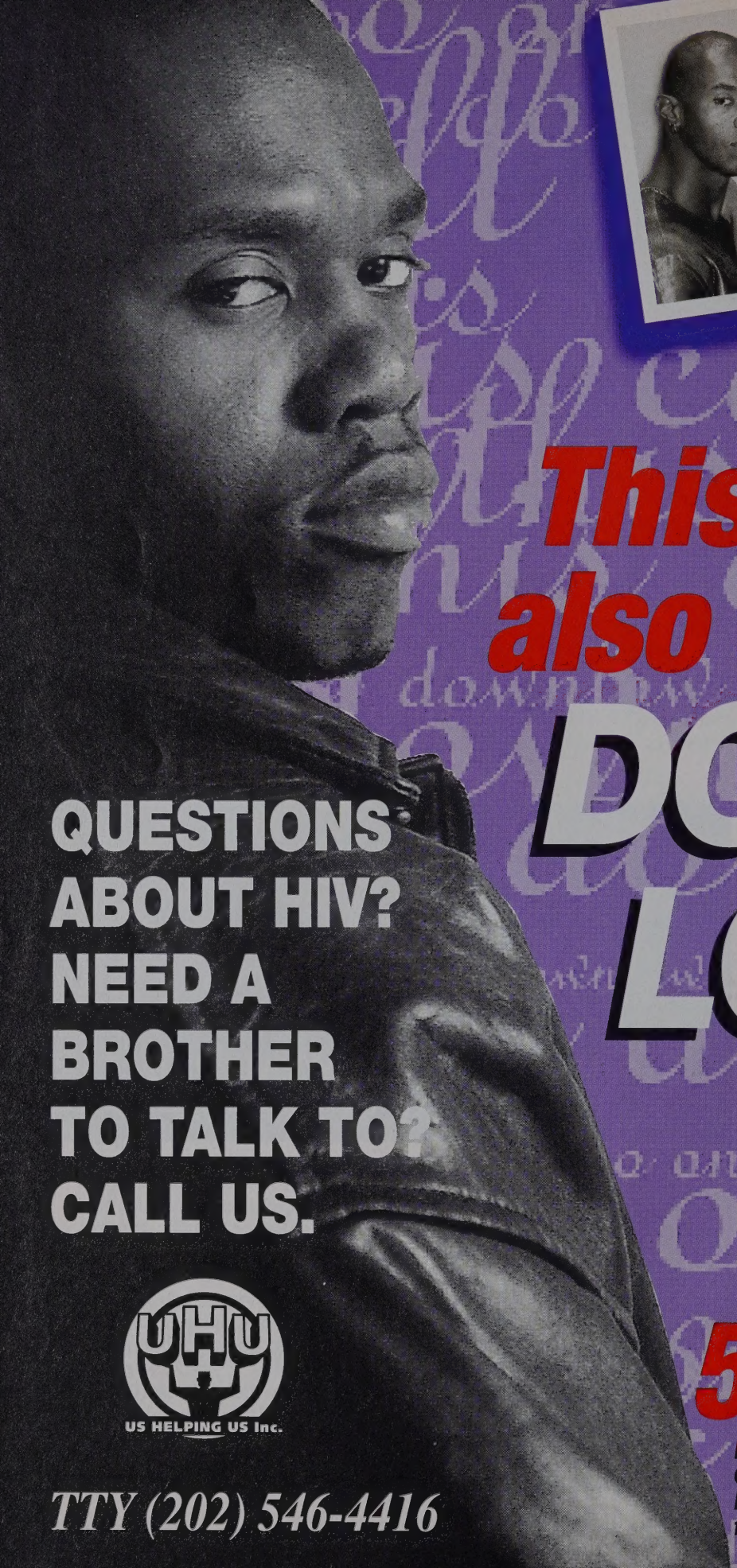

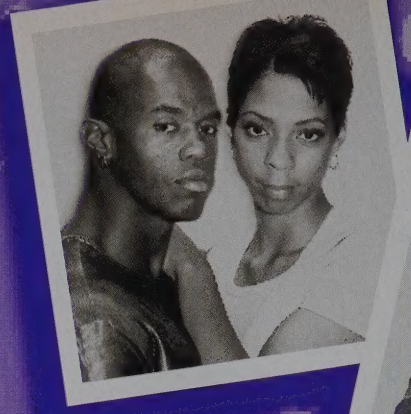

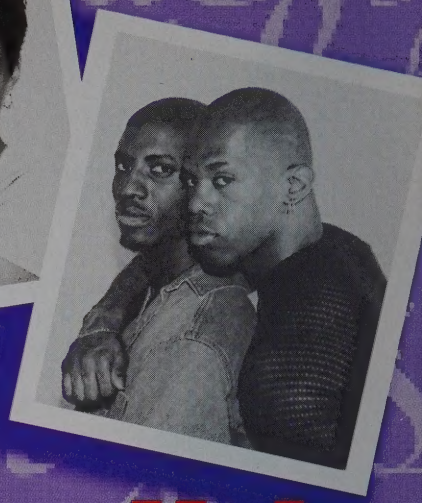

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Sex Talk

by Geanie Bond

Q&A

Q. My partner and I have been in a long-term relationship and I would like to know how to negotiate sexual acts that I am not comfortable with.

Dear Uncomfortable;

With care and gentleness.

That you and your partner are in a long-term relationship, may suggest a certain level of comfort with the person. This will allow, hopefully, for the kind of patience and consideration that is needed, as well as an atmosphere that is open for exploration.

You and your partner might allow yourselves, during a relaxed time, outside of the bedroom, to talk about your sexual fantasies, your desires, as well as any reluctance or discomfort surrounding these desires. Your partner will need to know your fears and anxieties in order to help you through them.

Tell your partner what might relax you, as you try on this newness. It might be foreplay, music, low lights, scented oils, your partner's voice talking and encouraging you, gently and softly.

When you and your partner have discussed this, thoroughly, and he/she is apprised of your desires for comfort, then whenever the two of you, spontaneously, want to go forward, you may.

It is important, while in the sexual arena, that your partner is in tune to your "body signals". For example, if your body tightens, your mate should proceed more slowly, and incorporate the methods you have, previously, suggested for relaxation. It is, also, important for your partner to inquire and seek permission to proceed. During these times, you might take deep breaths and focus on the pleasure between the two of you. You might even develop a tender touch between the two of you that would signal your partner when to stop, slow, or proceed.

"As you become more relaxed, your partner will know this by your muscle tone, your breathing, heart rate, and by all means, talk with one another."

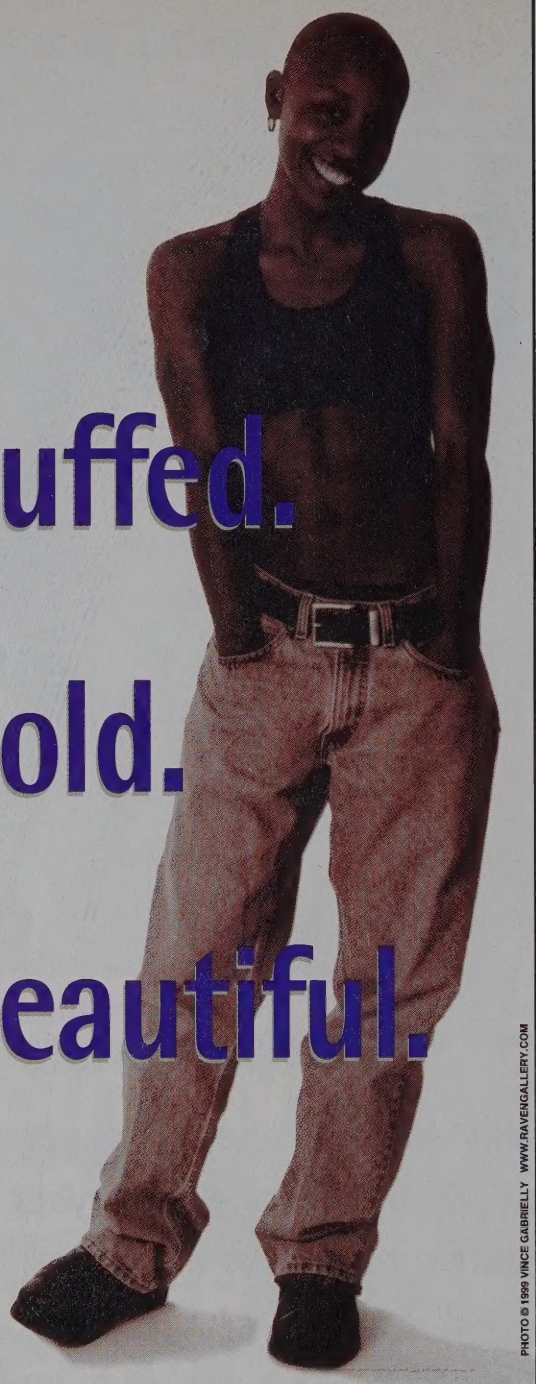
As you become more relaxed, your partner will know this by your muscle tone, your breathing, heart rate, and by all means, talk with one another.

It is important to remember two things; As long as it is not psychologically or physically damaging, two people, certainly, have the right to agree to their hearts' delight, on most acts, within the privacy of their bedroom. Secondly, any act that you feel you are morally against, or just don't feel you can be a participant; should not be a part of your repertoire.

This is psychologically damaging to you, as an individual; and to your relationship, in general.

Should your partner pressure you to carry-out certain sexual acts, your issue is not the sexual acts, ------it is the relationship. Be loving, be gentle, be patient and caring toward each other. You are both attempting to expand your sexual horizons for the mutual pleasuring and deepening of the relationship. V

Geanie Bond is a licensed marriage and family therapist specializing in hypnosis and sex therapy. Send questions to SexTalk@venusmagazine.com



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The i-Phone $399.00 By Big Planet, model shown is #2050. Purchase through The Empowerment Network Business Center 718-655-4730, ask for Cecile Jackson or Visit www.theempowermentnetwork.org or www.bigplanet.com.

The Swopper Chair www.swopper.com

EventsCalendar

April 12-15, 2001 National Black Lesbian Conference Swissotel, Atlanta, GA, Register online at www.zunainstitue.org or call 510-482-1671 or 770-592-0673.

April 16, 2001 12th Annual GLAAD Media Awards presented by Absolut Vodka. the awards will take place in four ceremonies to be held in New York City on April 16th, in Los Angeles on April 28th, in Washington , D.C. on May 12th, and in San Francisco on June 9th. For tickets visit www.glaad.org.

April 19, 2001 9th International Gay & Lesbian World Travel Expo, NYC, Thurs. Metropolitan Pavilion, Chelsea 110 W. 19th St., btwn 6/7 Ave. 4-6 pm

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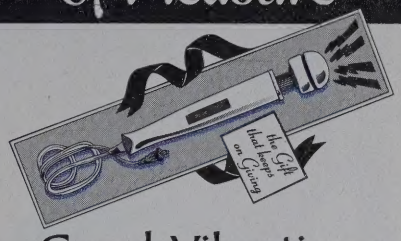

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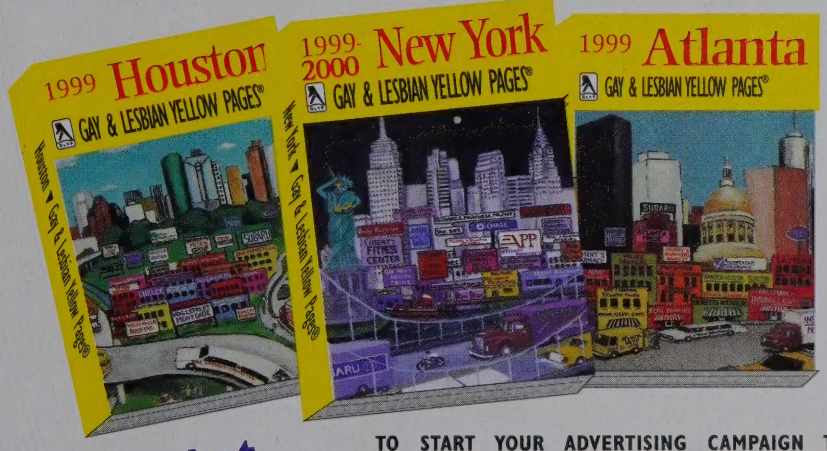

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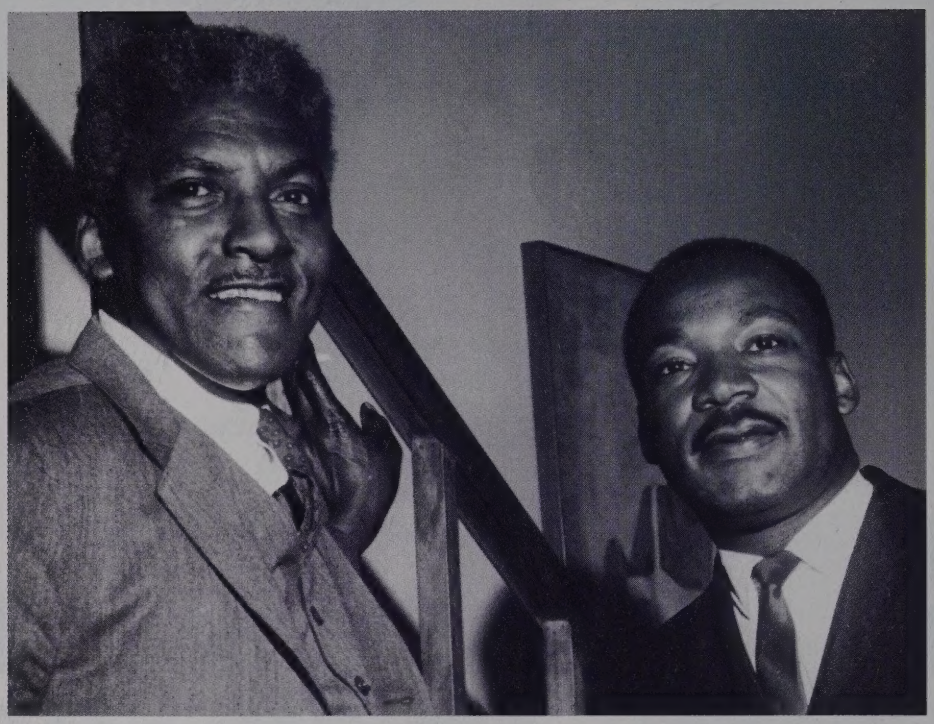
Bayard Taylor Rustin, 1912-1987



Bayard Rustin & Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the home of Dr. Arthur C. Logan in 1962. Photographer unknown, courtesy of The Bayard Rustin Fund, Inc.

"Rustin worked to establish a social order in which love, as demonstrated preeminently in the life of Jesus, shall be the motivating force."

–Bayard Rustin

Sings Twelve Spirituals On the Life of Christ.

As a young man, Bayard Rustin was told many times that he might have a career as a professional singer. Rustin did sing with noted folk singer Josh White and Leadbelly and even made an album of spirituals. But a career in music lost out to a lifetime of service in civil and human rights.

Since his college days at Wilberforce and Cheyney State Teachers College, Rustin devoted his life to the struggle for racial and world brotherhood as befits a young man brought up by a Quaker grandmother. In 1941, he joined the staff of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an organization of people in more than a score of countries who repudiate violence as a means of settling international or inter-group conflicts.

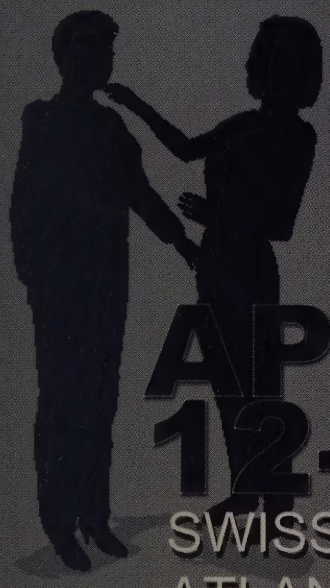
In this capacity, Bayard Rustin traveled back and forth across the United States, Europe and India, expounding the doctrine of nonviolent goodwill, demonstrating Ghandian technique of noncooperation with evil and enthralling audiences with his music.

Although Rustin was one of the most important leaders of the American civil rights movement from the advent of its modern period in the 1950s until well into the 1980s, his name was seldom mentioned. He received comparatively little press or media attention. His was a behind-the-scenes role that, for all its importance, never garnered Rustin the public acclaim he deserved.

It was Rustin who provided Dr. Martin Luther King with some practical advice on how to apply Gandhian principles of nonviolence to the boycott of public transportation, then taking shape in Montgomery. By all accounts it was Rustin who was the chief architect of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom which took place on August 28, 1963. It was the high point of a life that had seen him sent to prison for draft resistance and arrested for public indecency in Pasadena, Calif., in 1953. That arrest was the first time that Rustic's homosexuality had come into public attention. At that time homosexual behavior in all states was a criminal offense.

Although the gay rights movement in the United States was still many years in the future, Rustin's conviction and his relatively open attitude about his homosexuality set the stage for him to become an elder gay icon in the decades to come. V

ZUNA Institute presents National Black Lesbian Conference 2001



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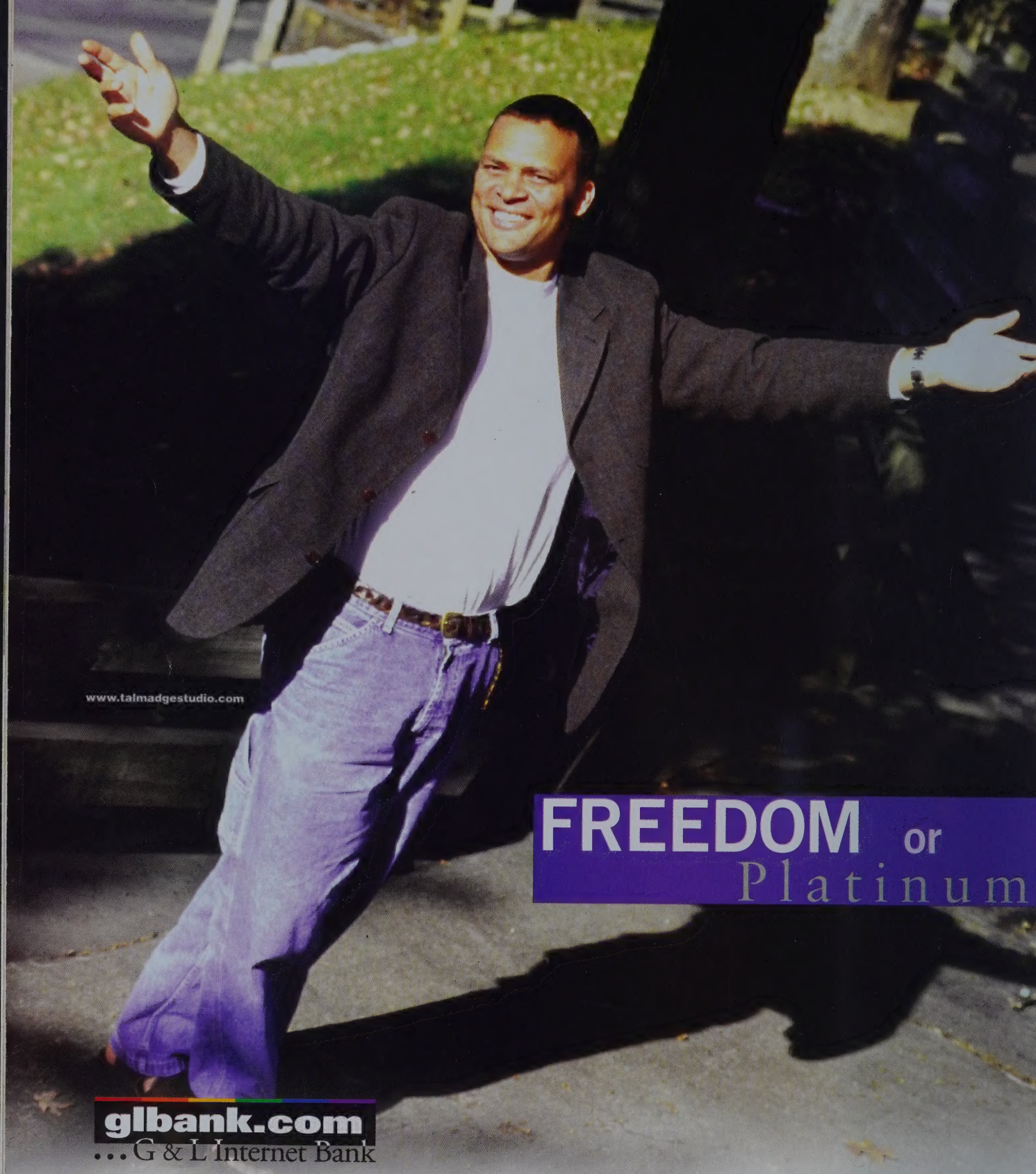

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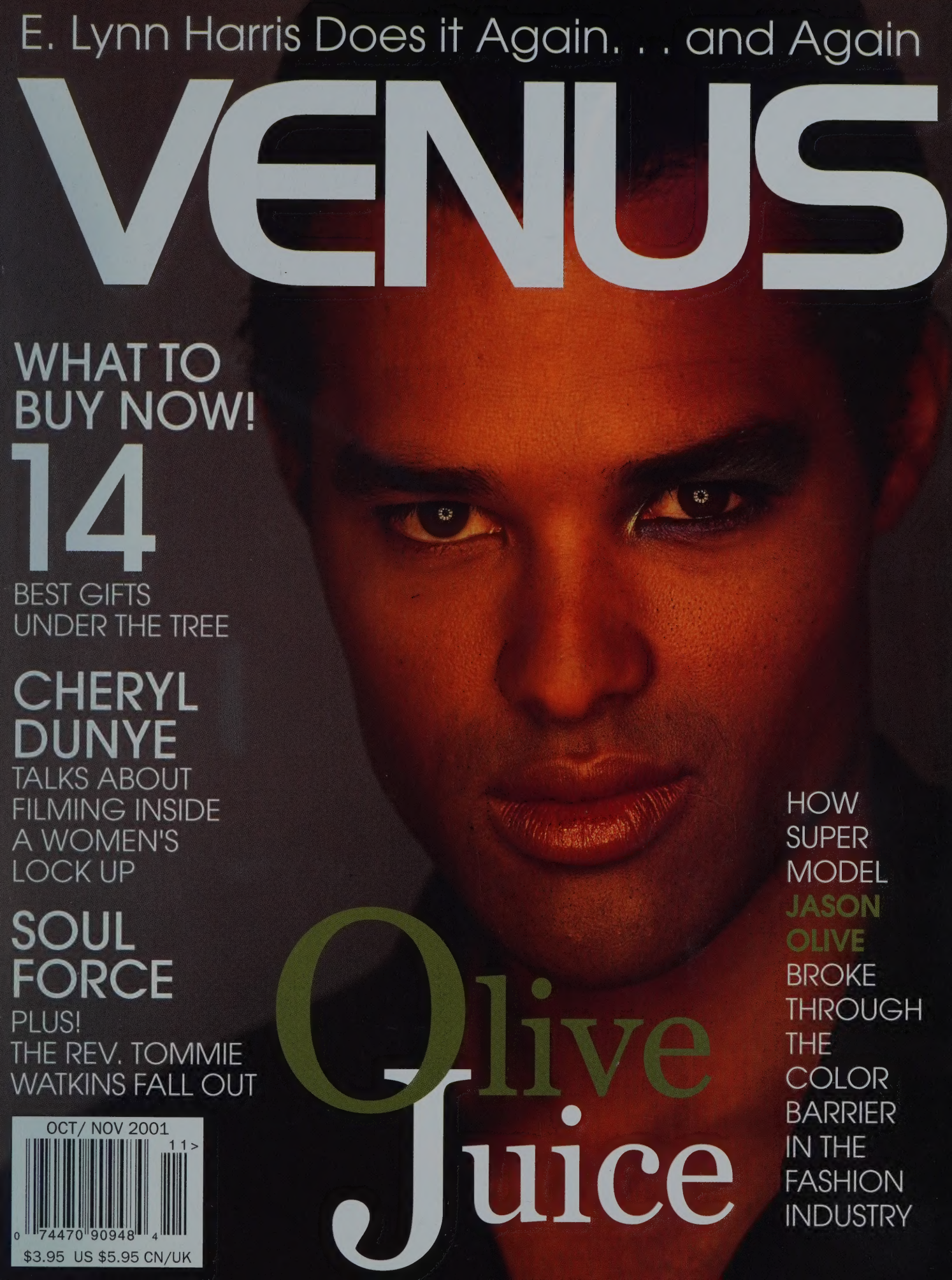

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OCT/ NOV 2001

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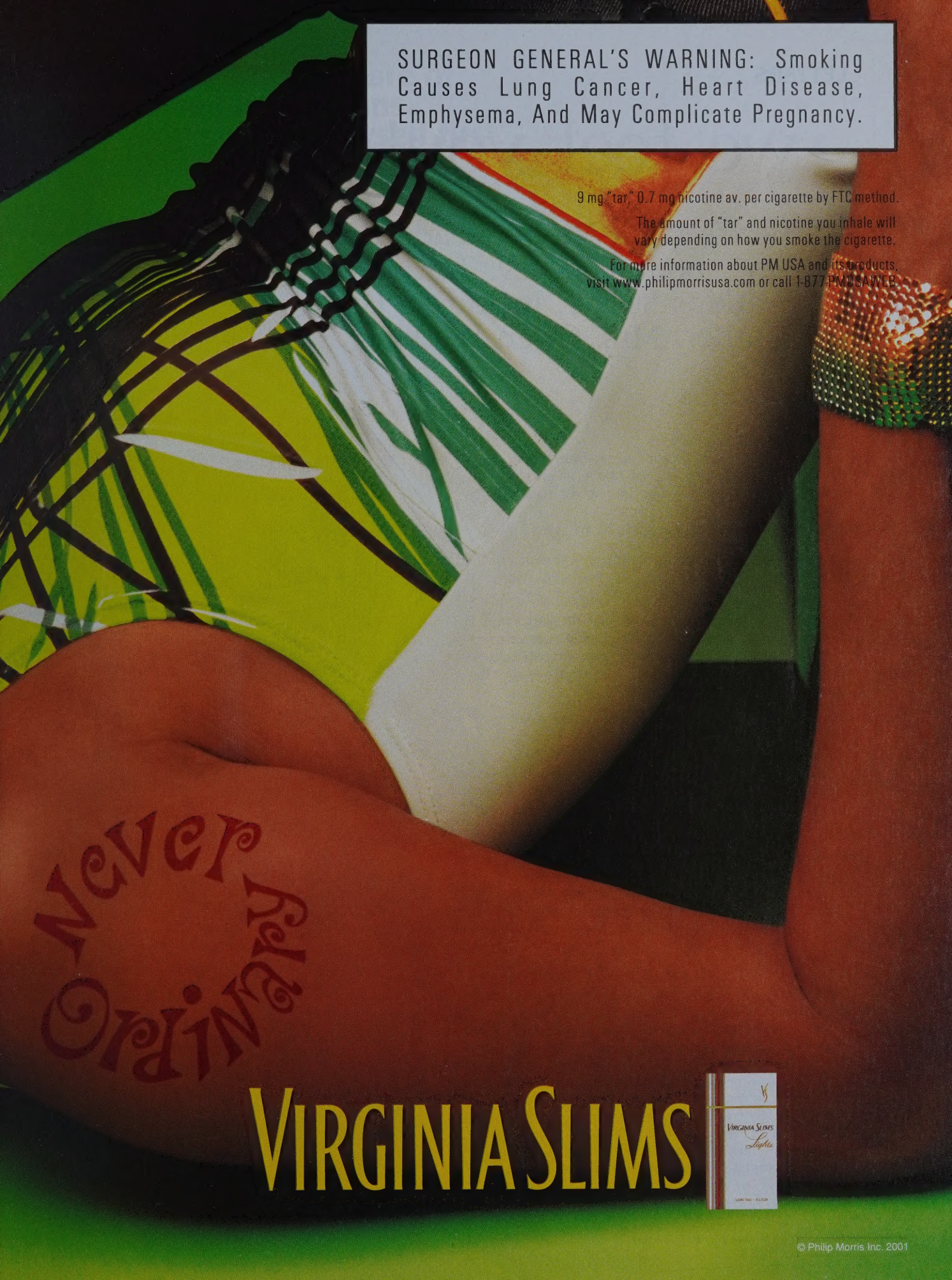
I will be many things but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we feel you!

Here's What Venus Readers Had to Say About The Rev. Tommie Watkins Story, Including His Mother, Mrs. Gwen Watkins.

Tremendous Response

Please accept my thank you for such a wonderful write-up on *Kevin's Room* in Venus July/Aug. Vol. 7 No. 4. The piece was thorough, thoughtful and provocative. The response has simply been tremendous!

Lora Branch, Producer
City of Chicago
Department of Health

Greatly Moved

I was really moved by the article in the July/Aug. Vol. 7 No. 4, 2001 issue regarding Rev. Tommie Watkins. I really wish there was something I could do to help, you see I experience some of the same issues that he does as I too am very involved in my church and community.

Jerry J. Porter, Minister of Music
via the internet

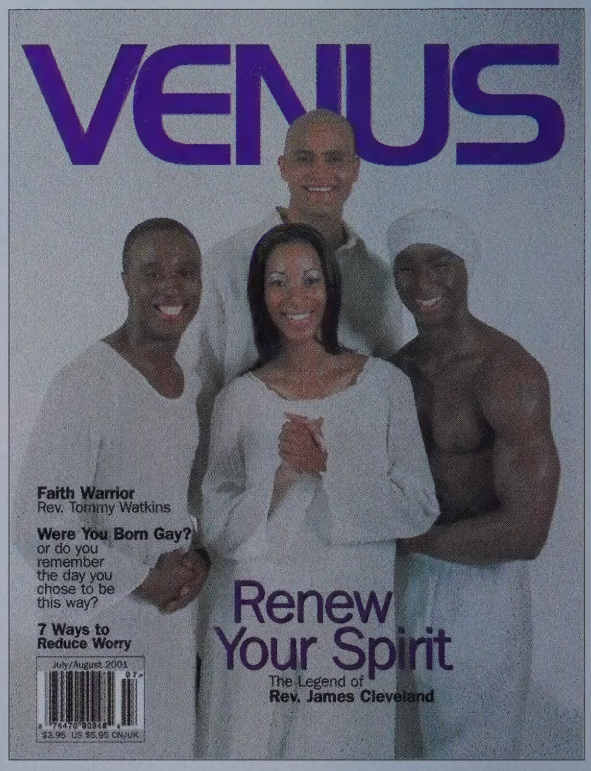
Watkins' Parents Outraged

My husband and I are very disturbed of the way we were portrayed by Drew Alise Timmens in your July/August 2001 edition of VENUS Magazine. Our son, Tommie Watkins Jr. sent a copy of the magazine to us.

I find it hard to believe that you would publish such a story after getting only one side of it. As the saying goes "there are two sides to every story". We have been lied on viciously in this article. When we questioned our son about certain statements concerning his father, he stated that Drew Alise Timmens supposedly has proof from our pastor concerning statement about us. Our pastor, however, denies ever having had an interview with anyone. Therefore, the statements concerning my husband and I are untrue.

[The statement] that "Watkins' parents have now publicly rebuffed him" is untrue. The next statement says that we "had asked First Baptist to bar their youngest son from the pulpit. The Board of Deacons on which Tommie, Sr. sits, granted the request." That is untrue.

The truth is; members in our congregation went to the pastor to complain about the embarrassment to the church concerning the article in the "Birmingham News", "The Washington Post" and other newspapers about his homosexuality. In many Baptist churches, women preachers are banned from entering the pulpit as well as publicized homosexuals. There are many homosexual ministers from hearsay but few if any admit it, or advertise it as Tommie Jr. does. The pastor said that something must be done. At the Board's meeting, he stated that he wanted to rescind his license and ordination papers as a Baptist minister. His father, Tommie Sr. stood up and *continued on page 13*



write us and share your thoughts

Send letters with your name, address, and daytime phone number, to: Letters, c/o Venus Magazine, P. O. Box 150 Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706, or e-mail us at letters@venusmagazine.com. Letters chosen for publication may be edited for length and clarity. All letters submitted become the property of Venus Magazine and may be used in any media.

Because taking care of everyone I love means taking care of myself first.

It's Time To Plan Your Future With VIRACEPT®.

Because it's strong and effective. Keep your viral load down with the #1 prescribed HIV medication of its kind.* VIRACEPT works with you to keep your life on track.

Because it's easy to live with. VIRACEPT's easy dosing schedule and manageable side effects have been helping all kinds of people continue to lead their lives on their own terms.

Because it saves future options. When choosing a treatment plan, it's important to consider what options you will have in the future. Studies show taking VIRACEPT early on leaves you with choices in treatment for later. Ask your doctor about your future with VIRACEPT.

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate
tablets and oral powder

VIRACEPT is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection. The most common side effect of VIRACEPT is diarrhea, which can usually be controlled with over-the-counter treatments. Some prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplements should not be taken with VIRACEPT, so talk to your doctor first. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, changes in body fat, and increased bleeding in hemophiliacs. **HIV drugs do not cure HIV infection or prevent you from spreading the virus.**

Refer to the important information on the next page. For more information, call toll free 1-888-VIRACEPT or visit www.viracept.com.

*IMS HEALTH National Prescription Audit™ data for Protease Inhibitors, 1/00-12/00.

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VIRACEPT®

(nelfinavir mesylate)

Tablets and Oral Powder

Information for Patients

about VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)

Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

Alert: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with VIRACEPT. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH VIRACEPT".

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. Although VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, VIRACEPT can help reduce your risk for death and illness associated with HIV. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in the number of CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT should be taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the face, legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Medicines you should not take with VIRACEPT:

Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)

Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)

Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others

Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)

Halcion® (triazolam)

Versed® (midazolam)

Mevacor® (lovastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Zocor® (simvastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.

Rifampin® (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®
This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with: Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

Phenobarbital

Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)

Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.

Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

Special considerations

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with VIRACEPT, talk to your doctor about possible drug interactions and side effects. If you take Viagra and VIRACEPT together, you may be at increased risk of side effects of Viagra such as low blood pressure, visual changes, and penile erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, you should seek immediate medical assistance to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

It is not recommended to take VIRACEPT with the cholesterol-lowering drugs Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible drug interactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between VIRACEPT and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take either of these cholesterol reducing drugs with VIRACEPT.

Taking St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort with VIRACEPT is not recommended. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or are planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease VIRACEPT levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to VIRACEPT or cross resistance to other antiretroviral drugs.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)

Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)

Zerit (stavudine, d4T)

Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT:
Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood is unchanged. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Viramune.

Sustiva™ (efavirenz)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Sustiva.

Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Norvir™ (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 15-20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily or 1250 mg (five tablets) two times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include nausea, gas and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. Your doctor may prescribe the light blue VIRACEPT Tablets either as 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or as 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. VIRACEPT tablets are film-coated to help make the tablets easier to swallow.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 to 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight		Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
Kg	Lb			
7 to <8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	—
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1 1/4	—
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1 1/2	—
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1 3/4	—
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	—
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2 1/4	—
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2 1/2	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3 3/4	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

Call 1.888.VIRACEPT

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Table of Contents

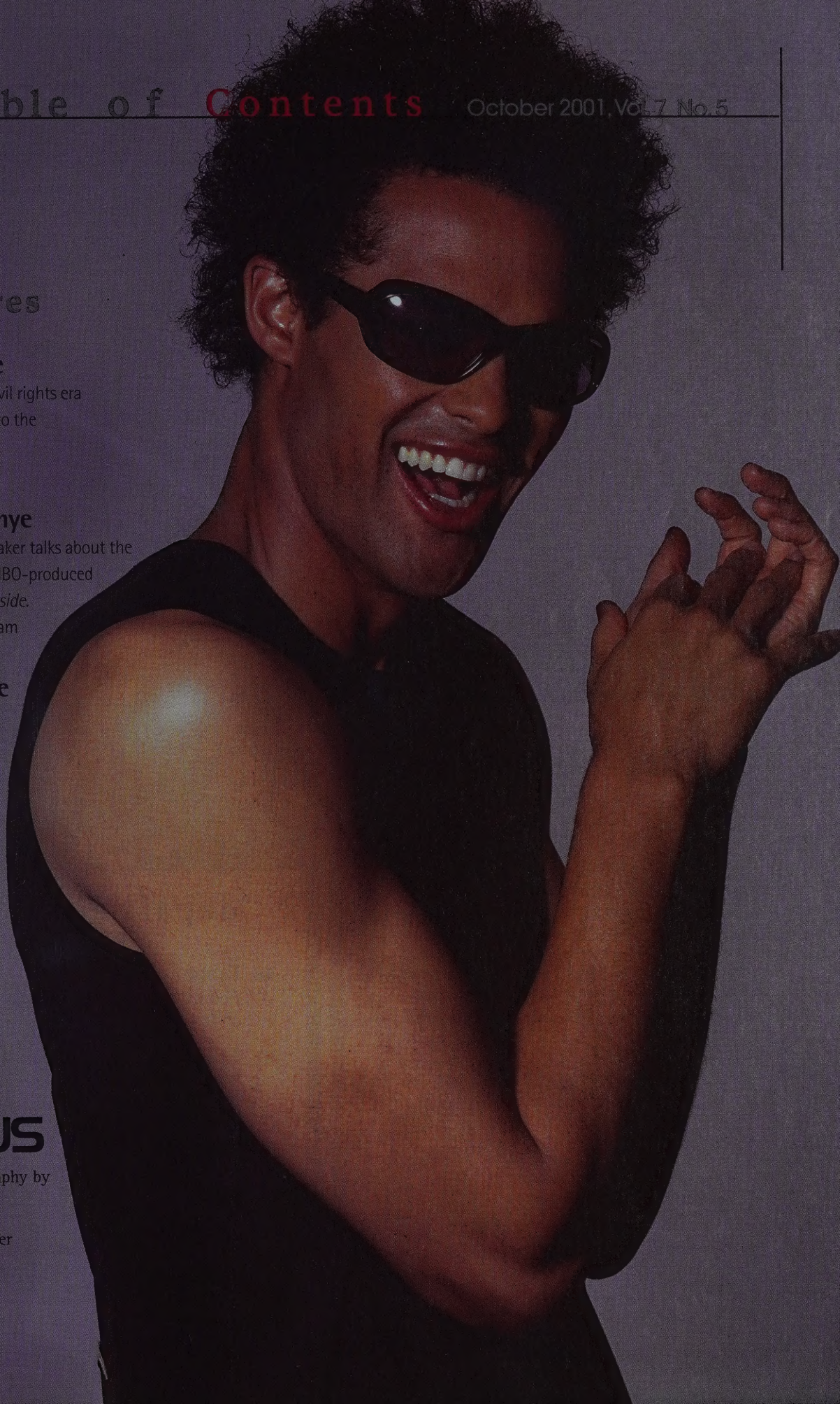
October 2001, Vol.7 No.5

features

22 **Soul Force**
A hero of the civil rights era lends his voice to the GLBT religious movement.

34 **Cheryl Dunye**
A lesbian filmmaker talks about the making of her HBO-produced film *Stranger Inside*.
by Al Cunningham

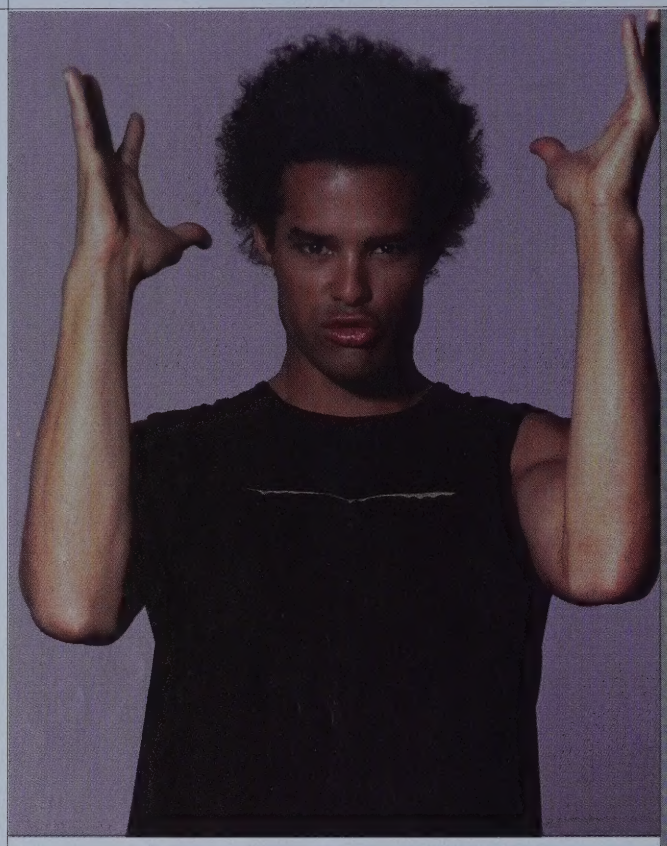
40 **Olive Juice**
Learn the Sexy and Spiritual side of Jason Olive, his rise to fame in the modeling industry back in the 80s.
by Claudia Miller



VENUS

Cover Photography by Bill Heuberger
Make-up by Francois Ilnseher

Table of Contents



departments

10 Letters
Our readers react to The Rev. Tommie Watkins' story, *Faith Warrior.* His mother cries foul in a letter to our editor.

13 Spirit
InFighting-The Rev. Irene Monroe returns with a message about unity within and between sections of the GLBT community.

14 The Camp
Check out our annual Holiday Buyers Guide before shopping for your special someone, offering the latest in sound and video for the home and more.

18 People
E. Lynn Harris on his new book; Atlanta City Council Candidate Sean Waites won't wait, pg. 20; and Cheryl Fields runs for US Senate, pg 21.

24 Frontline
The Aftermath of the Venus feature about Rev. Tommie Watkins story on pg. 24, GMAD's Northeast Annual Conference at Brown University pg 26, Report on Amenia & African Americans.

30 For Real
Angela Basset's latest movie project, Diana Ross vows to return, Liz Smith hosts for AmFar, Phil Wilson honored.

36 Shelf Life
Books-Living the Life Prequel, The Comedy Bible, Best Black Women's Erotica, In Search of Pretty Black Men, The Day Easy E Died, Dark Continent of Our Bodies; Music-Crossing Music's Color Line, Pg. 37.

departments

48 Destination
Find out if Minneapolis is really the Coolest Place on Earth.

51 Money
The Best of Times, The Worst of Times. Our expert, Dale Bryant, advises investors on what to do now.

54 Piece of Mind
Love Undone-One man's search for love out in the open.

58 Legendary
The legacy of Ruth Waters, co-founder of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum.

Kevin R. Free

Guest Editor this issue, Kevin R. Free, is an actor and playwright living in New York City. He has performed his one-man show, *Face Value*, to critical acclaim at the NY International Fringe Festival. The show is now being developed for an off-Broadway run. "A fellow actor introduced me to VENUS. I love it and I knew instantly that I wanted to be a part it." He has contributed to several magazines, including American Legacy.

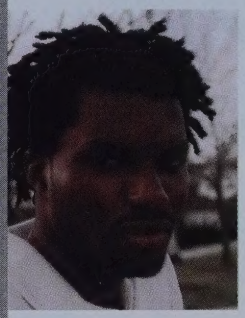
Holding it Down

have camera, will travel?

This is a call for entries. Photojournalist, if you tell a great story with pictures, and love to write as well, we'd like to hear from you. Send samples of your published works and contact info to: Photo Editor c/o Venus Magazine, P. O. Box 150 Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706, or e-mail editor@venusmagazine.com.

Terri-Lynne Waldron

Terri-Lynne was born in Montreal Quebec Canada and has been writing for 15 of her 34 years. Now living in Toronto Ontario, she is in her last year at the University of Toronto with a triple minor in Fine Arts Studio, Caribbean Studies and English. She freelances for a variety of magazines both in Canada and in the United States. Check her out in *Crossing Music's Color Lines* on pg 37.

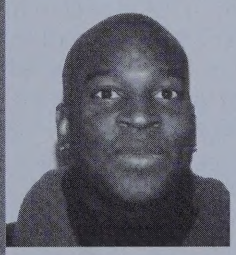


LeRoy Whitfield

Until now, LeRoy has been an in-the-trenches journalist reporting on Black America's AIDS war for VIBE, New York's Daily News and as a former senior editor at POZ magazine. After over ten years of grappling with the subject professionally and personally (he tested HIV positive in 1989), Venus decided to send him on a well deserved vacation--to Minneapolis, Minnesota (see page 48). A dyed-in-the-wool Midwesterner, Whitfield was born and raised in Chicago. He currently resides in New York City and is working on a book about rapper Eazy-E.

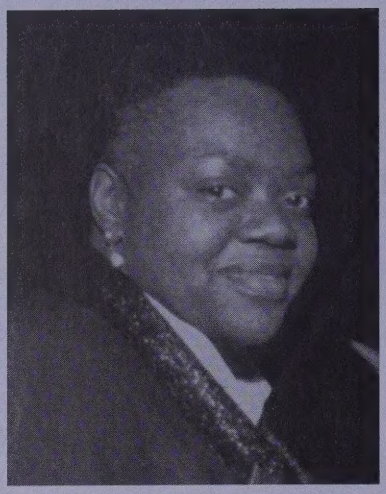
Claudia Miller

Claudia lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn with her Chihuahua, Chanel. She is the Editor-in-Chief of LesbiaNation.com and has been published in OUT, Curve, Nylon and Manhattan File. She recently contributed a chapter on lesbian travel to the book "Gay Tourism: Culture, Identity and Sex," which will be published by Continuum Press next Spring. Claudia interviewed super model/actor Jason Olive for our cover story *Olive Juice* on page 40.



Orville Lloyd Douglas

Orville, 25, is a student at York University in Toronto studying psychology. He has been published in a variety of newspapers and magazines including Xtra!, Canada's largest gay and lesbian biweekly, the Toronto star and NOW magazine. Orville is currently working on his first novel. Read his article, Love Undone, on page 54.



(even when you don't feel it)

My grandmother has had this 'Keep Smiling' postcard on her dresser since 1956. We delivered her to heaven's door this summer. Now that she's smiling down on me from above, I keep this card on my desk and glance at it when I need a lift. I miss her so much. She was given 82 years on this earth, a long time to live well. The same cannot be said for the thousands of people who died in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001.

It's hard to keep smiling when we feel grief stricken and traumatized. But most of all we've been frightened. I'm always a bit nervous on planes but I know I'll fly again very soon. That's not what frightens me. The thought of stepping onto an elevator in a tall buildings does not in the least unnerve me. What scares the Hell out of me is war.

We know that something has to be done to prevent other terrorist attacks, but the silence on how many American casualties are to be expected over the coming months and years is making me sick. I, for one, do not 'have the stomach for it.'

Last month, my 19 year old nephew, Nathaniel, left to join the army. This was already in the works before the bombings. He's a computer networking wiz kid who wants to see the world. Before September 11th, we were certain that this was a great plan for him. Now I can't get to sleep at night. The thought of Nate being shipped home in a body bag is more than I can bare. At his going away party, several young men his age commented on the possibility of getting drafted.

"Didn't you see *Saving Private Ryan?*," giggles my younger nephew, Eric. "I can't go. I'm the last 'Hall.'"

Another chubby young man, who would normally never mention his battle with the bulge, says,

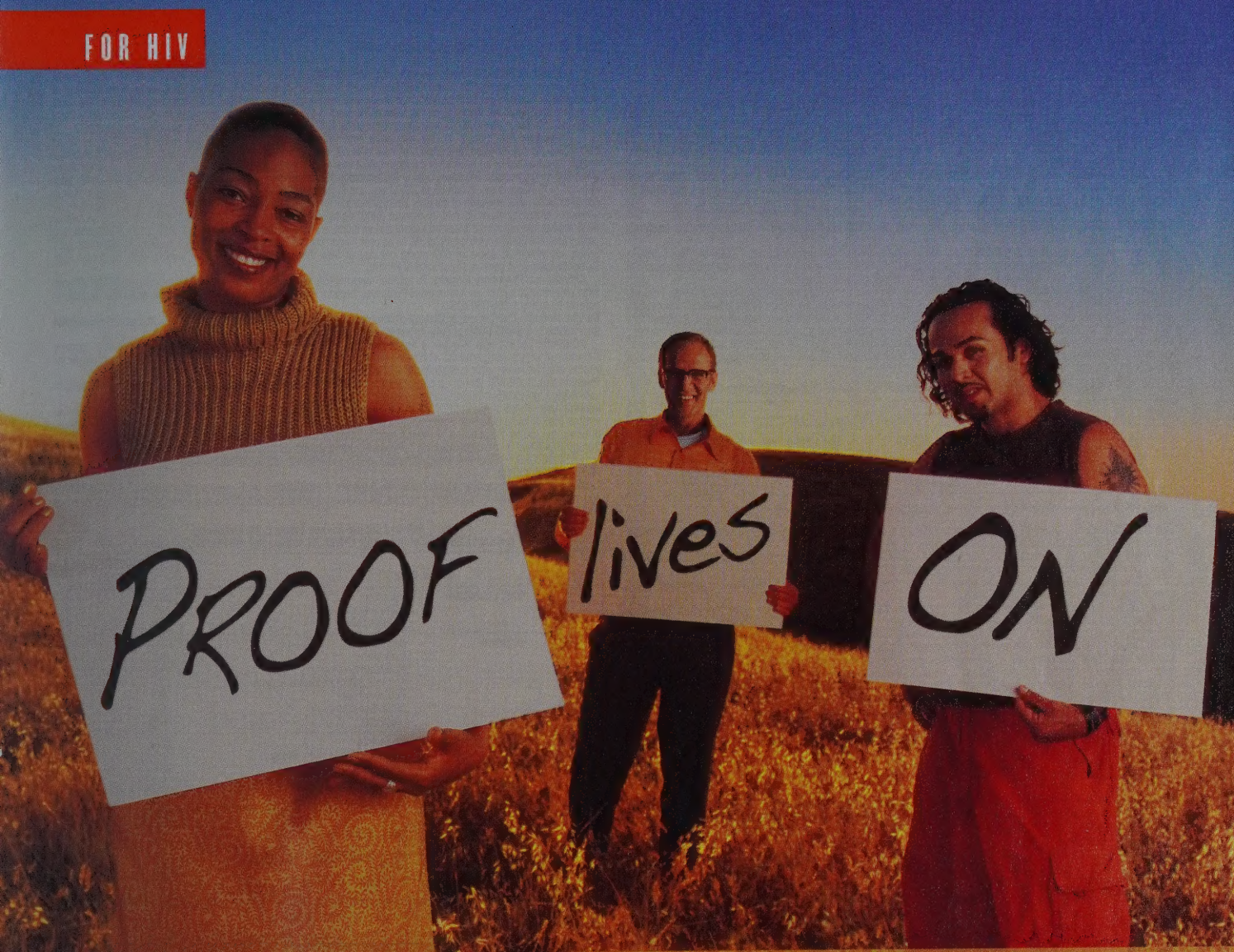
"I know they've got some kind of weight restriction."

He's serious. They're just kids but lately all they can think about is how to avoid getting killed in World War III.

I feel pangs of guilt when I consider my reservations about going to war when so many innocent people have already died. I'm frightened that we as Americans are not being told the whole truth about why these murderers are so angry at us. I'm frightened that eventually black men and boys will be once again be shipped to the frontlines like during the Vietnam war. I'm listening for how many more lives this 'New War' will cost. What I'm NOT hearing from the Whitehouse is what is most terrifying to me.

We're doing the best we can to 'get back to normal' if that's even possible. I glance over at my postcard and keep smiling.

FOR HIV



Ask your doctor about

COMBIVIR®

150 mg lamivudine + zidovudine 300 mg

ONE TABLET TWICE A DAY

2 powerful anti-HIV medicines in one tablet

COMBIVIR contains two medicines proven to help people with HIV live longer, healthier lives

- One tablet, twice a day, with or without food
- Used in more patients and more major combination studies than any other HIV therapy

SAFETY INFORMATION

- COMBIVIR does not cure HIV infection/AIDS or prevent passing HIV to others
- COMBIVIR should be used with other HIV medicines
- Make sure to see your doctor regularly because serious side effects can occur, such as muscle damage and a decrease in red and white blood cells
- A buildup of lactic acid in the blood and an enlarged liver, including fatal cases, have been seen
- Low risk of fat wasting, tingling or burning in the hands or feet, or problems with the pancreas
- The most frequent side effects are headache, upset stomach, malaise or fatigue, and runny nose

For information:
CALL 1-877-TREAT HIV or visit our Web site at www.TreatHIV.com

Please see Brief Summary for COMBIVIR on the following page.

gsk GlaxoSmithKline

BRIEF SUMMARY

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

The following is a brief summary only; see full prescribing information for complete product information.

WARNING: ZIDOVUDINE, ONE OF THE TWO ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN COMBIVIR, HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH HEMATOLOGIC TOXICITY INCLUDING NEUTROPENIA AND SEVERE ANEMIA, PARTICULARLY IN PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED HIV DISEASE (SEE WARNINGS). PROLONGED USE OF ZIDOVUDINE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH SYMPTOMATIC MYOPATHY.

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING LAMIVUDINE, ZIDOVUDINE, AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: COMBIVIR in combination with other antiretroviral agents is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection.

Description of Clinical Studies: ***COMBIVIR:*** There have been no clinical trials conducted with COMBIVIR. See CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY for information about bioequivalence. One COMBIVIR Tablet given twice a day is an alternative regimen to EPIVIR Tablets 150 mg twice a day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day in divided doses.

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine: The NUCB3007 (CAESAR) study was conducted using EPIVIR 150-mg Tablets (150 mg b.i.d.) and RETROVIR 100-mg Capsules (2 x 100 mg t.i.d.). CAESAR was a multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled study comparing continued current therapy [zidovudine alone (62% of patients) or zidovudine with didanosine or zalcitabine (38% of patients)] to the addition of EPIVIR or EPIVIR plus an investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, randomized 1:2:1. A total of 1816 HIV-infected adults with 25 to 250 (median 122) CD4 cells/mm^3 at baseline were enrolled: median age was 36 years, 87% were male, 84% were nucleoside-experienced, and 16% were therapy-naive. The median duration on study was 12 months. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Patients (%) With At Least 1 HIV Disease-Progression Event or Death

Endpoint	Current Therapy (n = 460)	EPIVIR plus Current Therapy (n = 896)	EPIVIR plus a NNRTI* plus Current Therapy (n = 460)
HIV progression or death	90 (19.6%)	86 (9.6%)	41 (8.9%)
Death	27 (5.9%)	23 (2.6%)	14 (3.0%)

*An investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor not approved in the United States.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: COMBIVIR Tablets are contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any of the components of the product.

WARNINGS: COMBIVIR is a fixed-dose combination of lamivudine and zidovudine. Ordinarily, COMBIVIR should not be administered concomitantly with either lamivudine or zidovudine.

The complete prescribing information for all agents being considered for use with COMBIVIR should be consulted before combination therapy with COMBIVIR is initiated.

Bone Marrow Suppression: COMBIVIR should be used with caution in patients who have bone marrow compromise evidenced by granulocyte count <1000 cells/mm^3 or hemoglobin <9.5 g/dL (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

Frequent blood counts are strongly recommended in patients with advanced HIV disease who are treated with COMBIVIR. For HIV-infected individuals and patients with asymptomatic or early HIV disease, periodic blood counts are recommended.

Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including lamivudine, zidovudine, and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Particular caution should be exercised when administering COMBIVIR to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with COMBIVIR should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

Myopathy: Myopathy and myositis, with pathological changes similar to that produced by HIV disease, have been associated with prolonged use of zidovudine, and therefore may occur with therapy with COMBIVIR.

PRECAUTIONS:

Patients With HIV and Hepatitis B Virus Coinfection: In clinical trials and postmarketing experience, some patients with HIV infection who have chronic liver disease due to hepatitis B virus infection experienced clinical or laboratory evidence of recurrent hepatitis upon discontinuation of lamivudine. Consequences may be more severe in patients with decompensated liver disease.

Patients With Impaired Renal Function: Reduction of the dosages of lamivudine and zidovudine is recommended for patients with impaired renal function. Patients with creatinine clearance " 50 mL/min should not receive COMBIVIR.

Information for Patients: COMBIVIR is not a cure for HIV infection and patients may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised that the use of COMBIVIR has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the major toxicities of COMBIVIR are neutropenia and/or anemia. They should be told of the extreme importance of having their blood counts followed closely while on therapy, especially for patients with advanced HIV disease. Patients should be advised of the importance of taking COMBIVIR as it is prescribed.

Drug Interactions: Coadministration of ganciclovir, interferon-alpha, and other bone marrow suppressive or cytotoxic agents may increase the hematologic toxicity of zidovudine (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY section of full prescribing information).

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, and Impairment of Fertility: ***Carcinogenicity:***

Lamivudine: Lamivudine long-term carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats showed no evidence of carcinogenic potential at exposures up to 10 times (mice) and 58 times (rats) those observed in humans at the recommended therapeutic dose.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was administered orally at 3 dosage levels to separate groups of mice and rats (60 females and 60 males in each group). Initial single daily doses were 30, 60, and 120 mg/kg per day in mice and 80, 220, and 600 mg/kg per day in rats. The doses in mice were reduced to 20, 30, and 40 mg/kg per day after day 90 because of treatment-related anemia, whereas in rats only the high dose was reduced to 450 mg/kg per day on day 91 and then to 300 mg/kg per day on day 279.

In mice, 7 late-appearing (after 19 months) vaginal neoplasms (5 nonmetastasizing squamous cell carcinomas, 1 squamous cell papilloma, and 1 squamous polyp) occurred in animals given the highest dose. One late-appearing squamous cell papilloma occurred in the vagina of a middle-dose animal. No vaginal tumors were found at the lowest dose.

In rats, 2 late-appearing (after 20 months), nonmetastasizing vaginal squamous cell carcinomas occurred in animals given the highest dose. No vaginal tumors occurred at the low or middle dose in rats. No other drug-related tumors were observed in either sex of either species.

At doses that produced tumors in mice and rats, the estimated drug exposure (as measured by AUC) was approximately 3 times (mouse) and 24 times (rat) the estimated human exposure at the recommended therapeutic dose of 100 mg every 4 hours.

Two transplacental carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice. One study administered zidovudine at doses of 20 mg/kg per day or 40 mg/kg per day from gestation day 10 through parturition and lactation with dosing continuing in offspring for 24 months postnatally. The doses of zidovudine employed in this study produced zidovudine exposures approximately 3 times the estimated human exposure at recommended doses. After 24 months, at the highest dose, an increase in incidence of vaginal tumors was noted with no increase in tumors in the liver or lung or any other organ in either gender. These findings are consistent with results of the standard oral carcinogenicity study in mice, as described earlier. A second study administered zidovudine at maximum tolerated doses of 12.5 mg/day or 25 mg/day (~1000 mg/kg nonpregnant body weight or ~450 mg/kg of term body weight) to pregnant mice from days 12 through 18 of gestation. There was an increase in the number of tumors in the lung, liver, and female reproductive tracts in the offspring of mice receiving the higher dose level of zidovudine.

It is not known how predictive the results of rodent carcinogenicity studies may be for humans.

Mutagenicity: Lamivudine: Lamivudine was negative in a microbial mutagenicity screen, in an in vitro cell transformation assay, in a rat micronucleus test, in a rat,bone marrow cytogenetic assay, and in an assay for unscheduled DNA synthesis in rat liver. It was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK$^{+/-}$ mouse lymphoma assay and clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK$^{+/-}$ mouse lymphoma assay, positive in an in vitro cell transformation assay, clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes, and positive in mouse and rat micronucleus tests after repeated doses. It was negative in a cytogenetic study in rats given a single dose.

Impairment of Fertility: Lamivudine: In a study of reproductive performance, lamivudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, revealed no evidence of impaired fertility (judged by conception rates) and no effect on the survival, growth, and development to weaning of the offspring.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 7 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, had no effect on fertility judged by conception rates.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C.

COMBIVIR: There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of COMBIVIR in pregnant women. Reproduction studies with lamivudine and zidovudine have been performed in animals (see Lamivudine and Zidovudine sections below). COMBIVIR should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

Lamivudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered lamivudine have been performed in rats and rabbits at 130 and 60 times, respectively, the usual adult dose (based on relative body surface area) and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. Some evidence of early embryolethality was seen in the rabbit at doses similar to those produced by the usual adult dose and higher, but there was no indication of this effect in the rat at orally administered doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose. Studies in pregnant rats and rabbits showed that lamivudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta.

Zidovudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered zidovudine in the rat and in the rabbit at doses up to 500 mg/kg per day revealed no evidence of teratogenicity with zidovudine. Zidovudine treatment resulted in embryo/fetal toxicity as evidenced by an increase in the incidence of fetal resorptions in rats given 150 or 450 mg/kg per day and rabbits given 500 mg/kg per day. The doses used in the teratology studies resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations (after one-half of the daily dose) in rats 66 to 226 times, and in rabbits 12 to 87 times, mean steady-state peak human plasma concentrations (after one-sixth of the daily dose) achieved with the recommended daily dose (100 mg every 4 hours). In an additional teratology study in rats, a dose of 3000 mg/kg per day (very near the oral median lethal dose in rats of 3683 mg/kg) caused marked maternal toxicity and an increase in the incidence of fetal malformations. This dose resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations 350 times peak human plasma concentrations. No evidence of teratogenicity was seen in this experiment at doses of 600 mg/kg per day or less. Two rodent carcinogenicity studies were conducted (see Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility).

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to COMBIVIR and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breastfeed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

COMBIVIR: Zidovudine is excreted in breast milk (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics: Nursing Mothers subsection of full prescribing information); however, no data are available on COMBIVIR or lamivudine. Therefore, there is a potential for adverse effects in nursing infants. **Mothers should be instructed not to breastfeed if they are receiving COMBIVIR.**

Pediatric Use: COMBIVIR should not be administered to pediatric patients less than 12 years of age because it is a fixed-dose combination that cannot be adjusted for this patient population.

Geriatric Use: Clinical studies of COMBIVIR did not include sufficient numbers of subjects aged 65 and over to determine whether they respond differently from younger subjects. In general, dose selection for an elderly patient should be cautious, reflecting the greater frequency of decreased hepatic, renal, or cardiac function, and of concomitant disease or other drug therapy. COMBIVIR is not recommended for patients with impaired renal function (i.e., creatinine clearance ≤50 mL/min; see PRECAUTIONS: Patients with Impaired Renal Function and DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine Administered As Separate Formulations: In 4 randomized, controlled trials of EPIVIR 300 mg per day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day, the following selected clinical and laboratory adverse events were observed (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Selected Clinical Adverse Events (≥5% Frequency) in 4 Controlled Clinical Trials With EPIVIR 300 mg/day and RETROVIR 600 mg/day

Adverse Event		EPIVIR plus RETROVIR (n = 251)
Body as a whole	Headache	35%
	Malaise & fatigue	27%
	Fever or chills	10%
Digestive	Nausea	33%
	Diarrhea	18%
	Nausea & vomiting	13%
	Anorexia and/or decreased appetite	10%
	Abdominal pain	9%
	Abdominal cramps	6%
	Dyspepsia	5%
Nervous system	Neuropathy	12%
	Insomnia & other sleep disorders	11%
	Dizziness	10%
	Depressive disorders	9%
Respiratory	Nasal signs & symptoms	20%
	Cough	18%
Skin	Skin rashes	9%
Musculoskeletal	Musculoskeletal pain	12%
	Myalgia	8%
	Arthralgia	5%

Pancreatitis was observed in 3 of the 656 adult patients (<0.5%) who received EPIVIR in controlled clinical trials. Selected laboratory abnormalities observed during therapy are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequencies of Selected Laboratory Abnormalities Among Adults in 4 Controlled Clinical Trials of EPIVIR 300 mg/day plus RETROVIR 600 mg/day*

Test (Abnormal Level)	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR % (n)
Neutropenia (ANC<750/mm^3)	7.2% (237)
Anemia (Hgb<8.0 g/dL)	2.9% (241)
Thrombocytopenia (platelets<50,000/mm^3)	0.4% (240)
ALT (>5.0 x ULN)	3.7% (241)
AST (>5.0 x ULN)	1.7% (241)
Bilirubin (>2.5 x ULN)	0.8% (241)
Amylase (>2.0 x ULN)	4.2% (72)

ULN = Upper limit of normal.
ANC = Absolute neutrophil count.
n = Number of patients assessed.
*Frequencies of these laboratory abnormalities were higher in patients with mild laboratory abnormalities at baseline.

Observed During Clinical Practice: In addition to adverse events reported from clinical trials, the following events have been identified during post-approval use of EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to a combination of their seriousness, frequency of reporting, or potential causal connection to EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR.

Endocrine and Metabolic: Hyperglycemia.
General: Sensitization reactions (including anaphylaxis), vasculitis.
Hepatobiliary Tract and Pancreas: Lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS), pancreatitis.
Musculoskeletal: Muscle weakness, CPK elevation, rhabdomyolysis.
Nervous: Seizures.
Skin: Alopecia, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, urticaria.

OVERDOSAGE:

COMBIVIR: There is no known antidote for COMBIVIR.

Lamivudine: One case of an adult ingesting 6 grams of lamivudine was reported; there were no clinical signs or symptoms noted and hematologic tests remained normal. It is not known whether lamivudine can be removed by peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis.

Zidovudine: Acute overdoses of zidovudine have been reported in pediatric patients and adults. These involved exposures up to 50 grams. The only consistent findings were nausea and vomiting. Other reported occurrences included headache, dizziness, drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, and 1 report of a grand mal seizure. Hematologic changes were transient. All patients recovered. Hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis appear to have a negligible effect on the removal of zidovudine while elimination of its primary metabolite, GZDV, is enhanced.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: The recommended oral dose of COMBIVIR for adults and adolescents (at least 12 years of age) is 1 tablet (containing 150 mg of lamivudine and 300 mg of zidovudine) twice daily.

Dose Adjustment: Because it is a fixed-dose combination, COMBIVIR should not be prescribed for patients requiring dosage adjustment such as those with reduced renal function (creatinine clearance " 50 mL/min) or those experiencing dose-limiting adverse events.

GlaxoWellcome

Lamivudine is manufactured under agreement from BioChem Pharma Inc.
Laval, Quebec, Canada

Glaxo Wellcome Inc.
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

US Patent Nos. 5,047,407; 4,818,538; 4,828,838; 4,724,232; 4,833,130; 4,837,208; 5,859,021 and 5,905,082

October 2000/RL-874

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Watkins' Parents Outraged

"I sincerely hope that the next time you bash any parents in your magazine, that you would take the time to get both sides. It is normal for all children to make their parents seem as terrible as they possibly can to make themselves look good."

LETTERS *continued from page 4*

asked the pastor if he had spoken to Tommie Jr. and the pastor said "no". Tommie Sr. then asked the pastor to talk to his son first, and see if he would relinquish the papers without taking it before the church for a vote to keep peace in the church and avoid further embarrassment. The pastor agreed and told the board he would report back to them what he and Tommie Jr. had discussed.

Tommie Jr. proceeded to tell our pastor that without his license he could not conduct weddings and do his ministry. The pastor reported back to the Board what was stated and the Board agreed to "leave everything alone" thinking that Tommie had converted to the Methodist faith, (which is what was stated in the article in the "Birmingham News" May, 2000) which meant he had already given up his Baptist rights.

I am his mother and have gone through so much for him and with him. When he hurts, we hurt. No one will ever love him more than his parents; however, there are people who seem to have brainwashed him into believing otherwise.

Homosexuality is not something I agree with, but then according to the word of God I do not believe that alcohol abuse, drug abuse, fornication, adultery, liars, or anything that corrupts the temple (the human body) of God is correct. That is why I feel that sins we commit in our body should not be applauded. This is my opinion and belief. I do not try to force my belief on anyone else. I feel that if Tommie Jr. would just live his life the way he wants to and not feel the need to publicize his sexual orientation that life would be easier for all of us.

I sincerely hope that the next time you bash any parents in your magazine, that you would take the time to get both sides. It is normal for all children to make their parents seem as terrible as they possibly can to make themselves look good.

Mrs. Gwen Watkins
First Missionary Baptist Church
Bessemer, Alabama

VENUS

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14 best gifts

Boss 701 Series II Direct/Reflect Speaker System

If You're Wondering What to Put Under The Tree This Holiday Season, Check Out These Venus Picks. You May As Well Treat Yourself.

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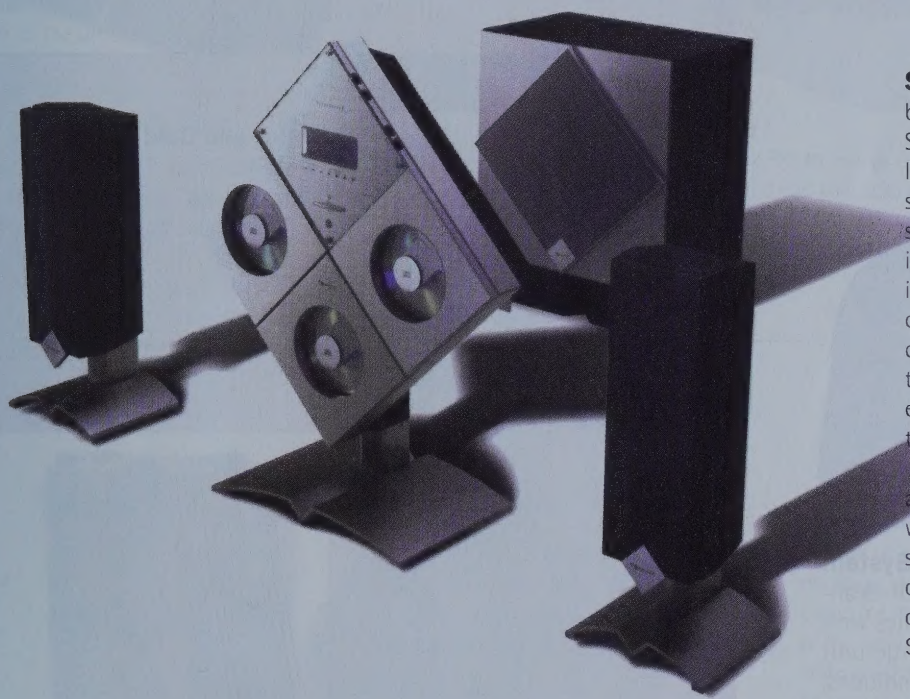
Do you know someone who hates stopping to ask for directions? Wrap up Pioneer's DVD navigation system this holiday season and he or she will never be lost again. With complete mapping for the U.S. and Canada, the system offers voice-activated navigation, traffic information, and a DVD video playback capability. $2,400

For GenX/GenY
Advanced Organic EL Car Stereo

For The One who has everything!

Give the best car stereo available. This head unit not only provides excellent CD-quality sound, it enables its owner to download personal images or videos to the face of the unit (like a computer screen saver) through the Organic EL technology. Download a photo of your current boyfriend/ girlfriend to your car stereo to really impress him or her – change photos as often as you like to personalize your car stereo. $800



SoundSpace 9

by Nakamichi. This Stereo Music System's treatment of space is brilliant and elegant. Four diamond shaped logos house an AM/FM stereo tuner, the other three bearing its own CD player. Each player is independent, by together they constitute an unusual 3-disc changer with remarkable properties. Subtly transparent front panels on each player let you check disc titles at a glance.

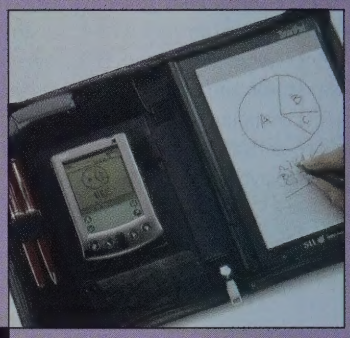
The Soundspace 9's main panel and speakers can be mounted on a wall or perched on a table with the small stands provided or supported on stylish floor stands that are optional. The choice is yours! $3,500

Soundspace 2

No, it's not a computer. For business or pleasure . . at home or away, nothing is as versatile as Nakamichi's Soundspace 2. It's an AM/FM stereo radio, an alarm clock, a dictation machine and an MP3/Windows Media player. At only 2lbs. it slips easily into your attache' and goes with you on travels. On one side is a 3 oz. detachable digital-audio player /recorder which stores more than an hour of CD quality music or 4 hours of dictation. $500

14 best gifts

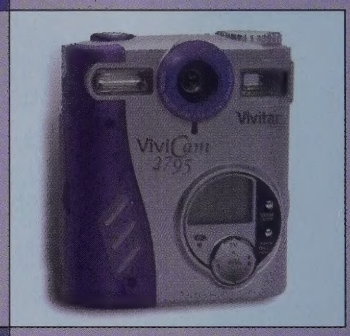
SmartPad2
The Seiko Instruments Smart- Pad2 instantly lets you capture everything you write and draw using the SmartPad pen on ordinary paper. Store your notes to any of the four Palm OS applications, transfer via Hotsync to your PC or email directly from your handheld. $199.

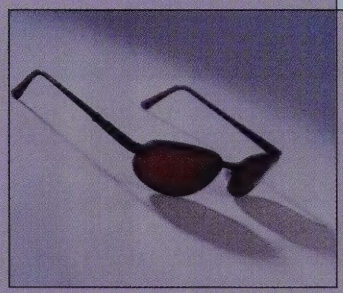


Hot and Cold Snack Box
Sharper Image Design's versatile new Hot and Cold Snack Box is ideal for eating at your desk or on the road. This Personal electronic mini fridge keeps bottled water, drinks and snacks cold or with a flip of a switch, keeps hot foods hot. $99

Braun Syncrio System
The world's first self-cleaning shaver. It comes with a clean and charge unit which cleans, conditions, dries, charges and stores the shaver. It charges in one hour for two to three weeks of cordless shaving time. Prices range from $99 for the shaver only to $199 for the complete system.

Vivitar's trend-setting Vivicam is the first 4 in 1 digital camera with an MP3 player. It can store 29 VGA photos as JPEG images and features a focus free 7.2mm lens, automatic exposure and built in flash. $199



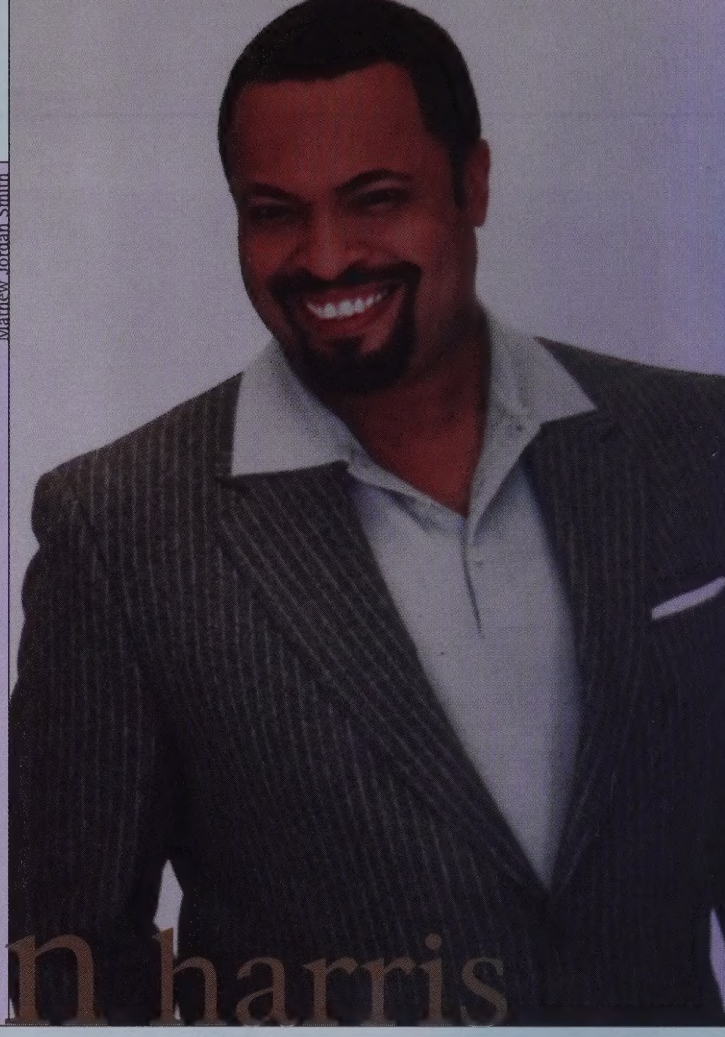


CODE Melanin-XP lenses.
A perfect gift for anyone who is as obsessed with fashion as they are with health. Code lenses feature a new patented sun protection system that incorporates melanin, nature's most powerful protective pigment. Spring-hinge technology allows a comfortable fit. $80.

Magellan, Olympus binocular
Designed as the ultimate outdoor binocular, the Magellan is hermetically, sealed making it waterproof, dirtproof and rugged enough for your most extreme activities. $519.

Yamaha FX140 WaveRunner
The ultimate personal water craft, the FX140, makes every day a summer vacation. It will hold three riders and can tow skiers or wakeboarders. Groundbreaking technology in Yamaha FX140 features the world's first four-stroke engine in a PWC for a noticeably quieter ride. $9,000

Inada Shiatsu Massage Chair
Instead of a spa gift certificate for a massage, go for the shitsu massage chair. The Inada shiatsu massage chair is the only massage tool that uses state-of-the-art infrared technology to scan your body, identify pressure points and give you customized massage programs. Your special someone will definitely use this gift everyday. $3,000.


Mathew Jordan Smith

e. lynn harris

Does It Again . . . and Again.

Well-known New York sports agent and former football star, John "Basil" Henderson, is up to his tush in trouble. Someone out there swears there are scandalous tidbits to be had about his background. Sources say Henderson is not all that he's led us to believe; he's - oh - so much more. The question is - More what? Could this have anything to do with jilted ex-fiancée, Broadway diva Yancey Harrington Braxton, whom Henderson left standing at the altar last year? Braxton, rumored to be on the brink of superstardom in the music biz, reportedly has a few secrets of her own she'd love to keep under wraps. How far will these two beautiful people go to keep their secrets hush-hush? For more dish on Basil and Yancey, pick up a copy of E. Lynn Harris' new novel, *Any Way the Wind Blows*, where the author spins a tale of blackmail and revenge sure to make readers lust after every page.

The sequel to last year's *Not a Day Goes By*, Harris' newest work is already number two on the Associated Press bestseller list and, like its predecessor, is almost guaranteed a top spot on both the New York Times and Publisher's Weekly lists. After all, who can resist the perpetually down-low Basil's decadently delicious bisexual antics? Who doesn't want Yancey to get a little of her own back as she struggles to rise from the ashes of disaster? In *Any Way The Wind Blows*, Harris rewards his readers for enduring his characters' childish displays of deceit, pique and petulance by transforming Basil and Yancey into almost tolerable adults instead of the spoiled brats they were in *Not a Day*.

Even with the literary success of his six previous novels,

Harris is not content. He is about to make his mark on the film world with his newly penned script for the remake of the 1970s movie, "Sparkle." Purchased for Whitney Houston's BrownHouse Productions, the story chronicles the rise and fall of a group similar to The Supremes and would have starred the late singer-actress Aaliyah. A new leading woman had not been announced at press time. "Sparkle" is Harris' first screenplay.

In addition to "Sparkle," Harris' self-published first novel, *Invisible Life*, is close to production with black lesbian producer Loretha Jones whose previous films include "B*A*P*S," "Meteor Man;" "The Five Heartbeats;" and "School Daze." "She's been very supportive of me," says the author. "When you sell your books, it's like giving up your children for adoption. You have to know the people and feel like they'll do them well. And so Loretha Jones has had the rights to *Invisible Life* for four years and finally, she's very, very close to making it happen."

"When you sell your books, it's like giving up your children for adoption. You have to know the people and feel like they'll do them well."

Ron Singleton

E. Lynn Harris, Author of **Any Way The Wind Blows** *at the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum with Author Linda Villarosa.*

As if that isn't enough, actress Pam Grier has purchased the film rights to *Not a Day Goes By* for her production house with plans to portray Yancey's dysfunctional mother, Ava. No firm production dates are set, but Harris doesn't think he'll write the screenplay. "It's a matter of timing. My schedule's really, really busy. If Ms. Grier continues moving at the fast rate she's moving, I will probably not be able to do it just because of prior commitments. She's trying to keep me involved and I trust her with it. She fell in love with Ava and she'll do it right."

With a promised autobiography in the works, the fall publication of his first children's book, *Diaries of a Light-Skinned Colored Boy*, and a book tour already in progress, Harris has taken the literary world by storm. He's proving he really can have it all. —Drew Alise Timmens

sean won't wait

Taking Her Atlanta City Council Bid to the People.

"I'm not favored to win, but I know that I can win. The fact that I'm on the ballet is a victory in itself. I represent those citizens in our community who are disenfranchised including gays and lesbians... I have the endorsement of The Stonewall Democrats as well as many others and have received a check from every gay bar in Atlanta. . .[however] black churches won't support me because I'm running as an out lesbian."

Atlanta City Council Candidate Sean Waites represents a new generation of Politicians. Waites is a woman, a lesbian and the youngest to run a citywide race in Atlanta. Ms. Waites maintains that she is the most uniquely qualified for the job: "The fact that I am an out lesbian strengthens my candidacy, because I understand the needs of all constituents. I have had to operate with strikes against me." If elected, candidate Waites will become the first African-American openly Gay or Lesbian council member in the City of Atlanta.

In 1999, Ms. Waites lost her brother to the AIDS virus. Eager to make a difference, she joined Aniz, Inc. a non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families live successfully with AIDS/HIV. Ms. Waites formerly served as a board member and currently is an active volunteer. Candidate Waites is also a supporter of the Human Rights Campaign, Georgia Equality Project and Stonewall Democrats. A constant advocate for the Homeless and Senior Citizen communities, Waites has proposed several upcoming projects directed at providing jobs and affordable housing for individuals needing assistance.

A former employee of Atlanta's Department of Finance, Ms. Waites has served in the financial services industry as a loan officer and mortgage broker. Waites states, "My ultimate goal is to pursue commercial, residential, business, social and community development among neighbors of Atlanta. Send contributions to her campaign to The Committee to Re-elect Sean Waites, 326 Nelson ST, Suite 404, Atlanta, GA 30313, or call 404.659.8837 to volunteer.

cheryl l. fields

Candidate for U.S. Senate Seat in Kansas

Ms. Fields is the only openly Gay, African-American, female Democrat that has ever run for a Senate seat in conservative Kansas. She very well may be the only openly Gay candidate Kansas has ever seen. Her critics fear she is too outspoken, too candid, and too intimidating in her fiery speeches, while her supporters view her presentations as charismatic, witty, and brilliant. Her sense of humor, excellent timing, and intellect attract the audience to her.

Ms. Fields holds a bachelor's degree from Emporia State University, an MBA from Phoenix University and she's planning to go to law school.

The owner of the only employment consulting firm in Topeka, KS, Ms. Fields is also a Manager and Special Investigator for the State of Kansas Human Rights Commission and an adjunct instructor at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park. A politician for all the people of Kansas, she is a loud voice for not only gay rights issues, but also for human rights issues. Her first book, Bouncing Back, is scheduled for release early next year.

For additional information about Ms. Fields or to become a volunteer for her campaign, email her directly at: emporia962000@yahoo.com Or view the newly created website at: http://geocities.com/KansasGayDem/

Donations to support the campaign may be mailed to: Fields & Associates, P.A., Post Office Box 5810 Topeka, Kansas 66605-5810 Attn: FIELDS CAMPAIGN FUND

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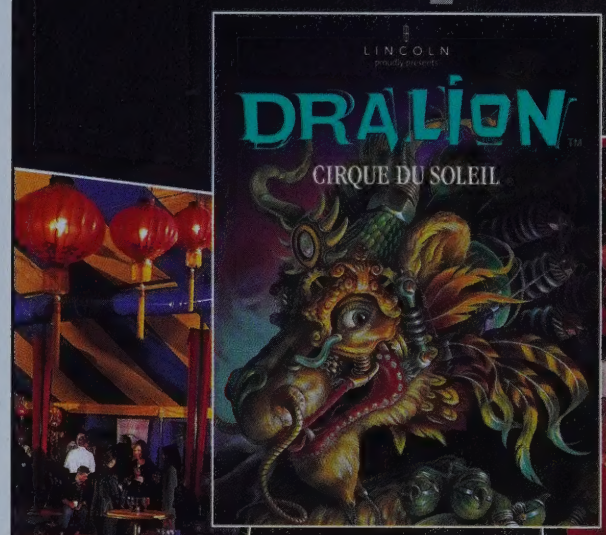

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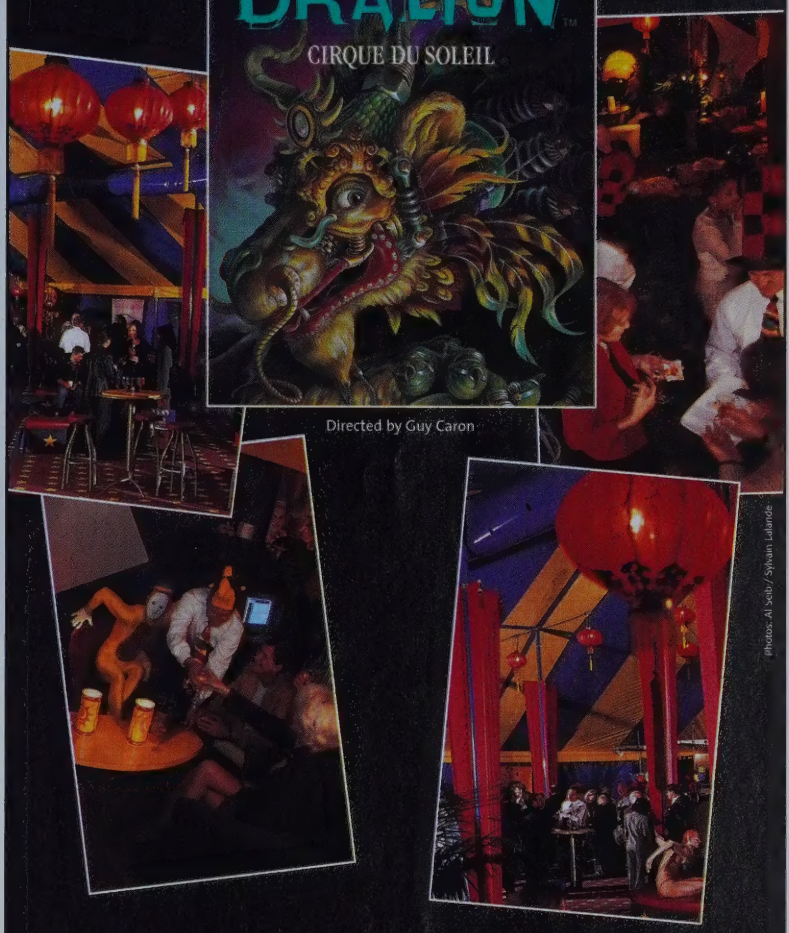

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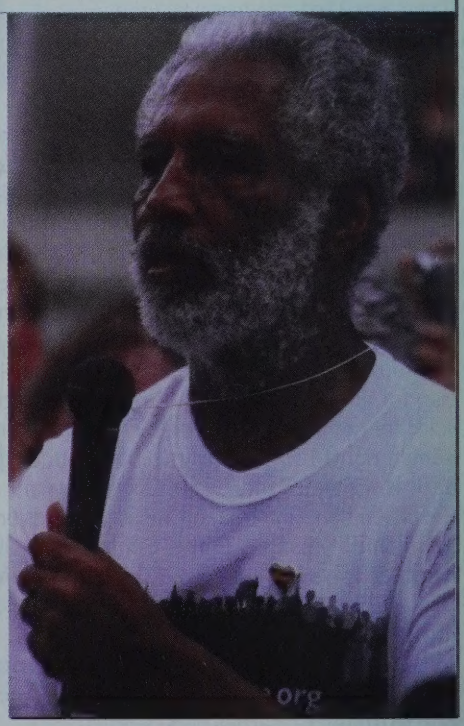
Above-Judy Osborne, Pastor Dexter Brecht, and Sandy of Hawaii are pallbearers during SoulForce event in New Orlean's. Below-Rev. Rodney Powell speaks to supporters.

Seeking Justice For All God's Children

words by Drew Alise Timmens
images by Ellen M. Osborne



In the lush, vibrant rainforests of Honolulu, Hawaii lives a man who helped change the world. Yet, by his own admission, he is a quiet, shy person content to tend the breathtaking garden steps carved out of the mountain jungle behind the home shared with his partner, Bob. If left to his own devices, Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart-and Bob-would be his only companions, however, he is also a man of conscience. It is a conscience that has thrust him to the forefront in difficult situations when he'd much rather stand behind others, silent and invisible, one of the many. But because he possesses knowledge, beliefs and skills few others have today, the man, Dr. Rodney Powell, cannot hide. He is a hero and veteran of the late 20th Century U.S. domestic wars euphemistically called the Civil Rights Movement and, therefore, a man marked as an indispensable general for a new conflict-the struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender religious equality. His weapon of choice is Soulforce.

continued on page 46

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DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP

WE URGENTLY NEED **YOUR** HELP! The Atlanta City Council will vote on the City's proposed Domestic Partnership Ordinances on Monday, June 21, 1993. The proposals are UNDER ATTACK BY THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT. It is up to US to make sure that our elected officials know that they MUST support these Ordinances. Please call and/or fax the Councilmembers and let them know how important this issue is to our community (and remind them that we VOTE in great numbers!). In addition, please plan on attending the Council meeting at 1:30 Monday at City Hall (55 Trinity Avenue, SW, 2nd Floor).

Atlanta City Council

FAX: 658-6454

Marvin Arrington	330-6030
Bill Campbell	330-6038
Thomas Cuffie	753-9034
Mary Davis	330-6030
Clair Muller	352-5247
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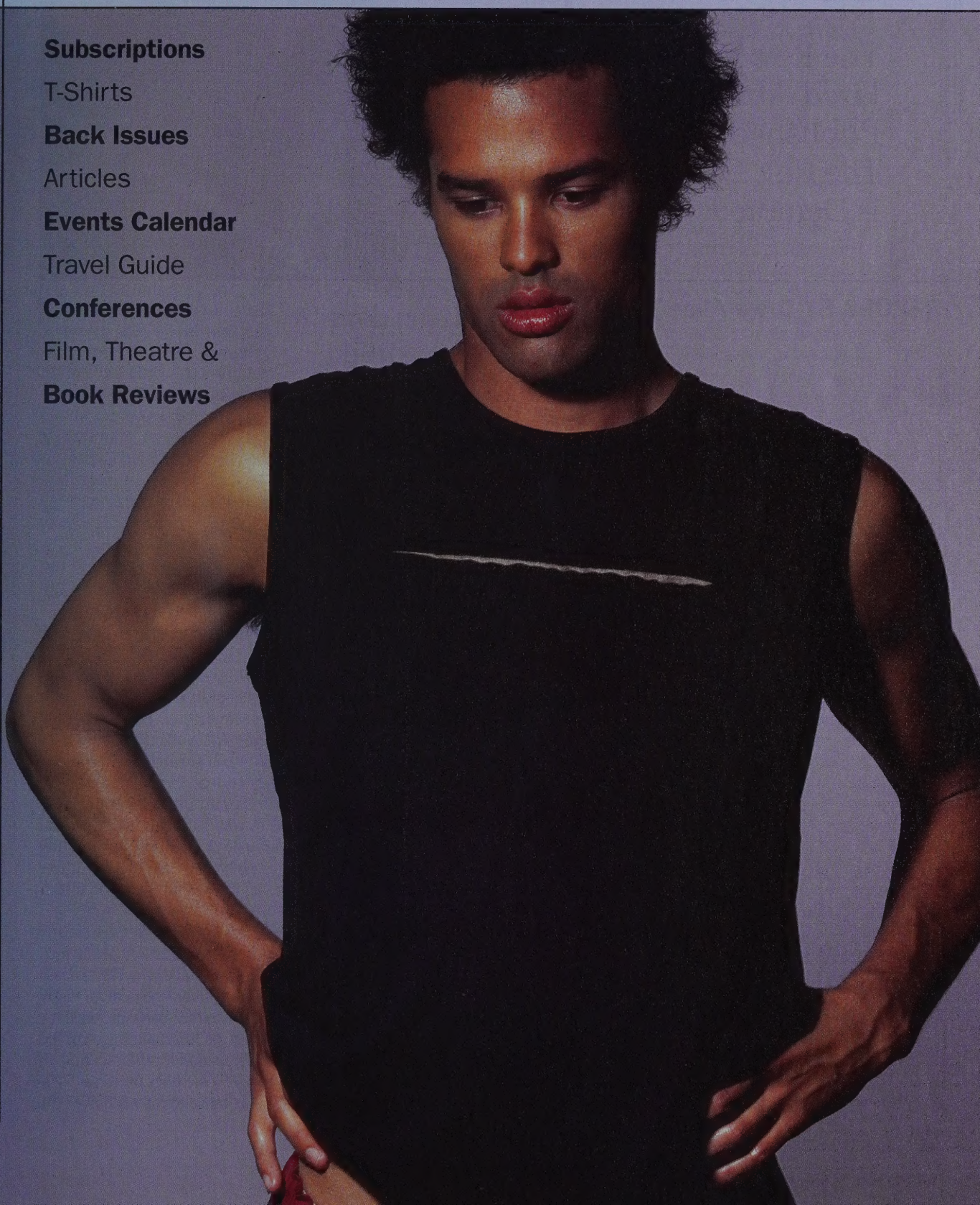


followup

The Rev. Tommie Watkins Fired After Venus Article Published. His Mentor, The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Hardy is Demoted.

Jonathan Brooks

REPORT BY Drew Alise Timmens

The Rev. Tommie Watkins, the Baptist minister working as an HIV/AIDS educator at Miami's Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church profiled in the July/August [Vol. 7 No. 4, 2001] issue of Venus Magazine, has been fired. In a letter dated August 8, 2001 informing Watkins of his termination, Rev. John F. White, Bethel's senior pastor, attributed the firing to reorganization of the Greater Bethel HIV/AIDS Prevention & Education Program that eliminated Watkins' position as program director. The termination was effective immediately and provided two weeks severance pay.

The Rev. Dr. Marilyn Hardy, Watkins' immediate supervisor and participant in the Venus article, was demoted from executive director of the HIV/AIDS Program to a new position, senior program manager. The new position has the same job description as executive director plus duties that were assigned to Watkins. However, a key difference is that she no longer has the authority to hire and fire employees. Hardy announced plans to leave the program at the end of this fiscal year. White has assumed the executive director spot in the reorganized program.

The reorganization was a surprise to both Watkins and Hardy, neither of whom believe White is qualified for his new position. "Rev. White, quite frankly, is not qualified to be the executive director of an HIV/AIDS ministry because he has not completed any HIV/AIDS prevention and education training," explained Watkins. "I don't even know that he's been tested [for HIV]."

Watkins met with the CDC program officer who has oversight of the Greater Bethel program at a training session in Atlanta days after his termination. He describes the officer's reaction as "shocked." When asked what will happen if the CDC finds the staffing at Greater Bethel sub-par, he stated, "They have indicated that they will go through the same procedure where they do the monitoring and if they see it's insufficient, they would deem it necessary that the program cease. So it's highly possible and probable that during this first quarter of next year, the program officer will recommend to the government that Bethel no longer receive funding."

With so much at stake, last years budget was nearly $395,000, not to mention the lives and health of the program's clients, it is difficult to understand why White chose to reorganize Watkins out of his position and demote Hardy. However, the reasons may be tied to their participation in the article *Faith Warrior* published in the July/August issue of this magazine. Hardy says, "In my opinion it is [retaliatory]. It doesn't make any sense to me." She goes on to say, "I've never really known it to be as tense as it's been over the

last [several weeks]. A number of things have happened."

Prior to completion of the *Faith Warrior* article, Watkins reported that White suddenly ended the Ministry of Reconciliation, an outreach ministry to the area's black LGBT community, that met at Greater Bethel twice a month. Congregants were greeted by a sign cancelling services when they tried to attend, but many had already heard of problems through the church grapevine. The ministry now meets at Hardy's home and is looking for another location.

White issued a memo to its staff on July 31, 2001, after Venus hit the newsstands, stating, "Be advised that at a regular meeting, [sic] on July 31, 2001, the Board of Stewards and Trustees approved that no information with reference to the ministries of Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church shall be given to the media without the expressed consent of the Senior Pastor.

Accordingly, effective immediately, all newsletters, advertisements, press releases and other forms of Communication [sic] must be approved by the pastor prior to release."

"I think the article in Venus precipitated it and [White's] fear or anxiety that [problems within the A.M.E. Church] would get public; that it being an online article [the original article is available online at http://www.venusmagazine.com/vol7num4_1.shtml], everybody was privy to it. I think this facilitated his 'gag order,' " Watkins reasons. He also notes that he replied to White's memo stating that several subsequent interviews had already taken place.

Watkins and Hardy state that they informed White of the upcoming article before it appeared and showed him a draft. According to them, White initially had no problem with the article, but his attitude quickly changed.

Hardy was informed by White's administrative assistant the next day that the senior pastor was so upset by an unidentified article that he could not come in to work. When he met with Hardy a few days later she reports, "White made the statement that Rev. Watkins had to go or he would have to go." Hardy protested that neither minister had to leave Greater Bethel, but White insisted that Watkins had "bashed the church" and said "You can't bite the hand that feeds you."

In contrast, Hardy believes the article only reflects Watkins' own experiences within the A.M.E. Church and, therefore, is not critical of the denomination as a whole. She also believes that a person should be evaluated on job performance only and that's the way she judged Watkins. In a job performance evaluation dated July 10, 2001 Hardy gave him an excellent rating overall with only two areas that needed improvement.

As the title of Venus' original article states, Watkins is a faith warrior. In true warrior fashion, he intends to fight his termination from Greater Bethel. Although he does not want his job back, he takes exception to the manner in which he was fired and the reasons. This writer has obtained a copy of the church's Personnel Policy Manual in which procedures for termination, suspension and grievances are outlined. White did not follow the manual. It requires that an employee receive a verbal notice, two written notices, have a meeting with the senior pastor and, finally, a letter of termination. Watkins only had a meeting with White and received a written notice of termination. Hardy had roughly the same considerations.

Congregants were greeted by a sign cancelling services when they tried to attend, but many had already heard of problems through the church grapevine.

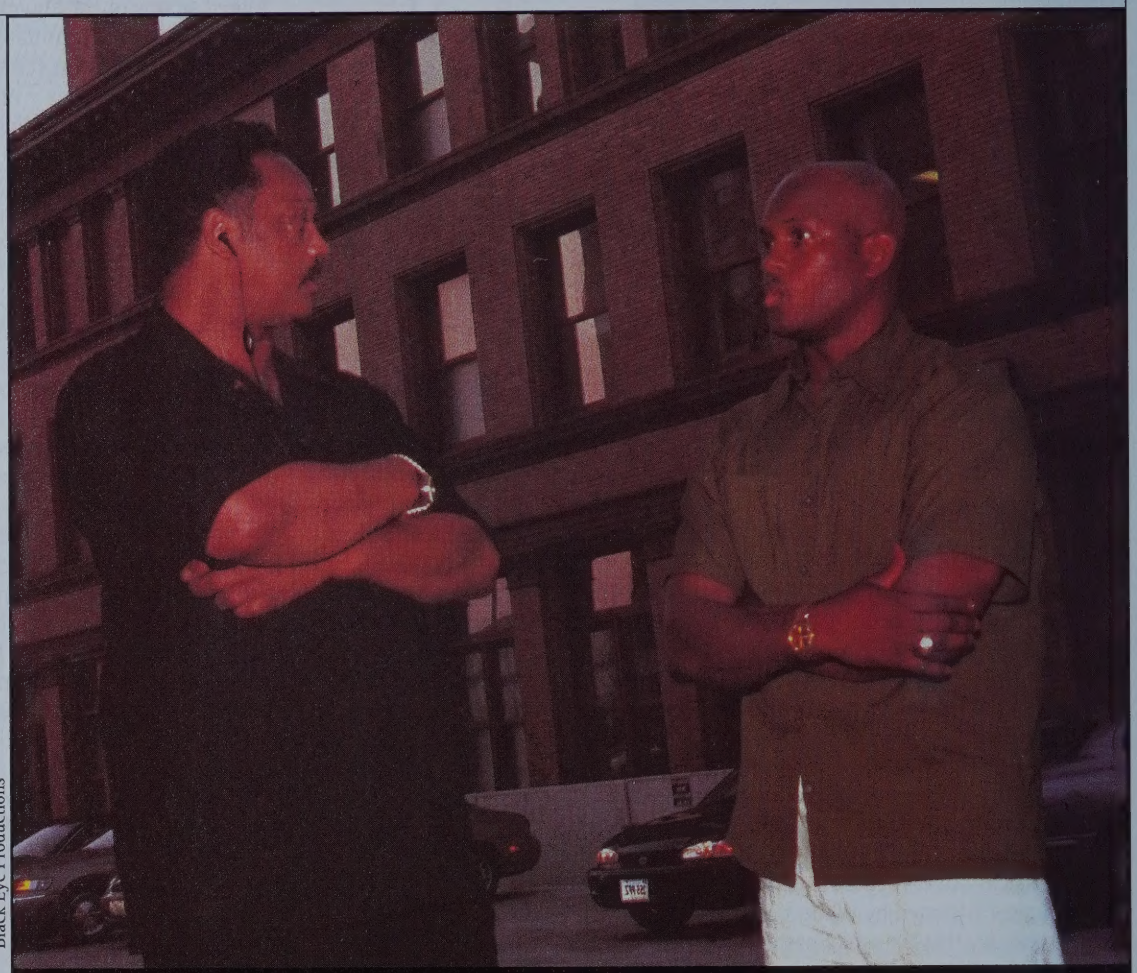
Watkins has met with an attorney whom he describes as "very hopeful." They expect to file a law suit against Greater Bethel by mid- to late-September. He plans to complete a Master of Divinity degree and work with either the United Church of Christ of the Episcopal Church, USA, both of which have expressed great interest in hiring him. "Several churches...have been very open and forthcoming in offering office space. It's more 'We've got to find someone to pay your salary.' And that's encouraging that people want me aboard, so I'm almost sure that it will work out," he says.

Reach Him Directly

Venus has received many e-mails and letters in response to the *Faith Warrior* article asking how Watkins can be supported and/or contacted. We will forward all correspondence received thus far to him and have set up a special e-mail address so that he can be reached directly. Please send e-mail to: RevTommie@yahoo.com. Readers who wish to send mail via regular post may send it to the magazine and we will forward it to him. Rev. Watkins c/o Venus Magazine, P. O. Box 150 Hastings, NY 10706.

black gay men take aim at HIV/AIDS

Rev. Jesse Jackson Keynotes at Brown University Conference

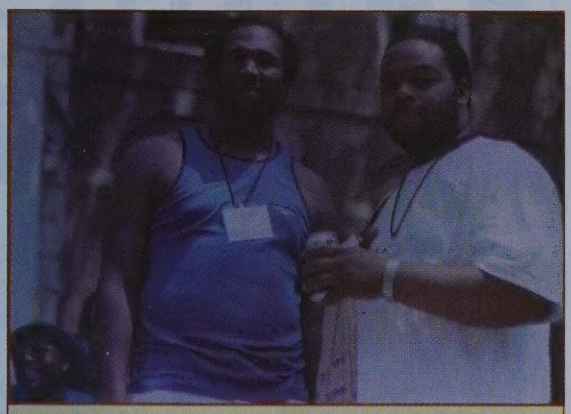


Black Eye Productions

The Rev. Jesse Jackson and Mr. Maurice Franklin, Director of Gay Men of African Descent's Capacity Building Program discuss the agenda at a Brown University conference on Black gay men and HIV/AIDS.

The data is not good. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal that African-Americans represented nearly 40 percent of all reported AIDS cases through June 2000. Of the estimated 40,000 new HIV infections each year, more than half occur among African-Americans.

Gay Men of African Decent (GMAD) is aware of this health crisis and has been a leading force to fight



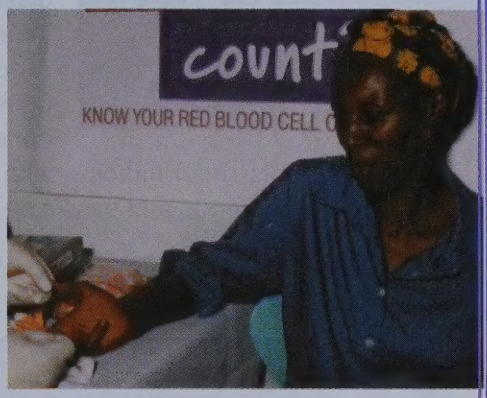
"This is not a discussion of Black gay men," Jackson said, "it's a discussion of 'World War III', of which Black gay men and women are a part."

HIV/AIDS through education and political advocacy. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. supported their efforts as a keynote speaker for GMAD's Second Annual Northeast Regional Conference, recently held on the campus of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. "This is not a discussion of Black gay men," Jackson said, "it's a discussion of 'World War III,' of which Black gay men and women are a part." He maintained that one of the most important allies in combating HIV/AIDS is the Black church. Challenging ministers to open their minds and hearts, he urged them to take AIDS tests publicly. In his closing remarks, Reverend Jackson noted that too many young people mistakenly assume that HIV/AIDS no longer exists. If church leaders join the fight, more young Black men will follow their example.

The conference, which galvanized and re-energized HIV/AIDS volunteer groups all over the Northeast, also hosted several workshops, including one called "Models That Work." Michael Hinson, assistant managing director for the City of Philadelphia, led the workshop, showcasing "Hot Tracks," a new telephone HIV/AIDS counseling hotline he developed. "Hot Tracks" offers multi-lingual, anonymous one-on-one or group counseling to African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, gays, bisexuals, and men who have sex with men, and has been fielding more than 200 calls a month since its launch last fall. For more information about the conference, please contact GMAD's Director of Capacity Building, Mr. Maurice Franklin at (212) 828-1697.

anemia&HIV

Feeling Tired and Weak? Check Your Red Blood Cell Count



As America enters its third decade of the AIDS epidemic, African Americans living with HIV may be overlooking HIV-related anemia, an important condition that affects up to 95% of HIV patients at some point in their disease. 97% of African American patients say their doctors communicate their T-cell count and viral load, however only 42% say their doctors communicate their red blood cell count, which is used to diagnose anemia. Nearly three in five (59%) African Americans have not discussed anemia with their doctors.

The Know Your Red Blood Cell Count! Campaign is a national red blood cell count education campaign targeted to people living with HIV. The campaign will define what anemia is, its symptoms and treatments with education available through a culturally sensitive, bilingual public initiative at the grassroots level. The campaign is targeted towards African American and Hispanic people. HIV-related anemia occurs from the infection itself or from taking medications to treat the disease such as AZT. The two major signs of anemia are fatigue and weakness but may also include rapid heartbeat, headaches, and loss of appetite and sex drive.

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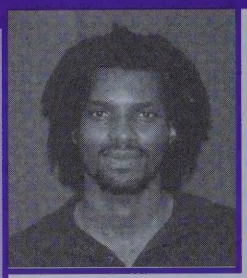

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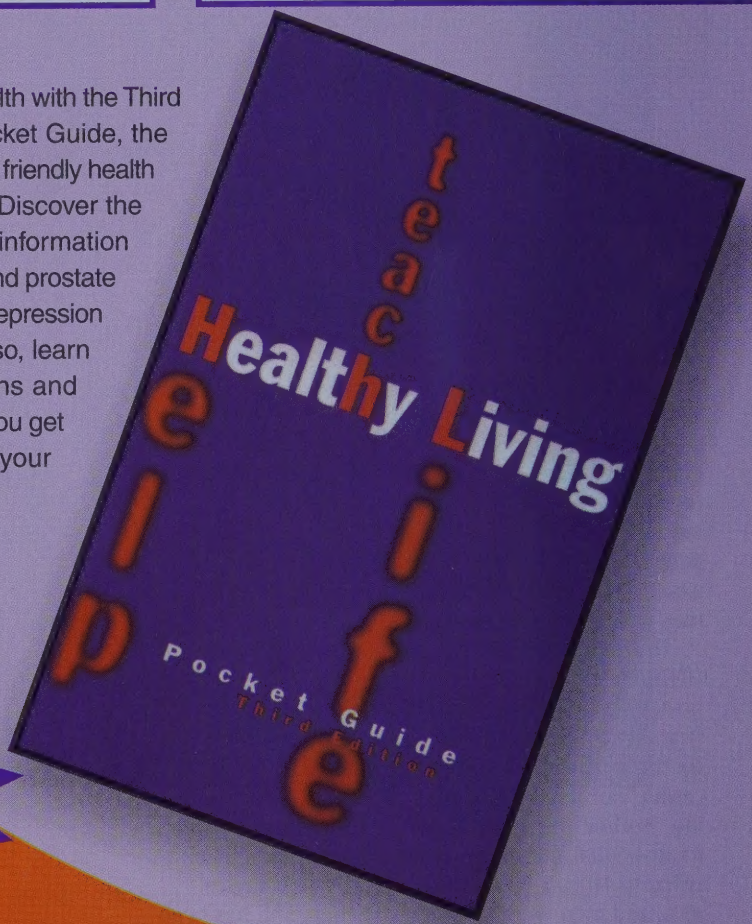

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MARILYN HUMPHRIES

infighting

Facing Our Moral & Spiritual Challenge

The Rev. Irene Monroe

Infighting can choke the spiritual and political life out of a people and a community. The toll it takes on us as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of African descent is evident by the lack of solidarity among us. We need solidarity in our Herculean struggle to combat unbridled racism in the larger LGBT community and unabashed homophobia in our black communities and churches.

While we complain about the aforementioned communities' indifference and inhospitality toward us, we too, are guilty of our indifference and inhospitality toward one another. We see our differences within our LGBT community as apart from one another instead of a part of one another.

The infighting in our LGBT communities - male versus female, Butch versus Femme in both male and female communities, gay and lesbian versus bisexual and transgender, professional versus working class - are all symptoms of internalized xenophobia. We hate and fear the stranger we see among and in ourselves.

The walls of hostility that we have erected in our community have made us foreigners and strangers among one another. And, these walls will remain erect until we cure ourselves of our fears and hatred not only of one another but also of ourselves.

As LGBT people of African descent we fail to realize that our gift and our struggle is that we are a diverse community within ourselves. Our diversity should not dilute our commitment and love toward one another; rather, our diversity should teach us more about its complexity, and, by extension, teach the larger society.

The moral and spiritual challenge before us is that of unity. United we can stand as a community; divided we will fall as a petty people. And the outcome is in our power. Our community cannot afford to be fraught with diva personalities or stymied by divisive ideologies.

The Kwanzaa principle of Umoja- unity-must take root in our self-definition, both as a people and a community. In understanding the interconnectedness between himself as the individual and himself as the community, John Mbuti said, "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am." In the face of our own self-respect and in embracing the Kwanzaa principle of Umoja-

The fighting among us must stop!
The distrust among us must stop!
The competitiveness among us must stop!

> "We see our differences as a part *from* one another instead of a part *of* one another."

Right now our focus needs to be on AIDS/HIV prevention, health and wellness, youth mentoring, leadership development, economic development, and spirituality, and not in maintaining the walls of hostility among ourselves and in the community that thwart both our physical resources and emotional strength.

How can we begin to heal ourselves of this brokenness?

When I posed this question to Dr. Thea James, an open African-American Emergency Room Physician, who is also a lesbian, she told me, "Maybe we need something like group therapy so that we find a way to dialogue on these issues to dissipate the fears and get beyond them."

Our power and efficacy in the community is measured not by how we stand alone and separate from each other, but instead how we stand together. If we begin to dialogue openly about these issues we will not only heal our brokenness, but we will also knit our communities back together. Aché

TINA PAUL

Angela Bassett

Born in New York City, Angela was once employed as a photo researcher at U.S. News & World Report magazine. In 1974 she began to consider acting as a career choice after an 11th-grade class trip to Washington, DC during which she saw actor James Earl Jones perform in a Kennedy Center production of the play "Of Mice and Men".

Pushed by a high school teacher, she applied for Yale and got a scholarship, ultimately spending 7 years there including 3 post-grad years studying drama. She first appeared in a small role in the cult favorite *F/X*, but it was not until 1990 that a spate of TV roles brought her notice. Her breakthrough role, though, was playing Tina Turner whom she had never seen perform before taking the role.

Bassett has built her career around playing some of the most celebrated real-life, pioneering black women of the twentieth century. She has just completed filming in her role as Civil Rights legend, Mrs. Rosa Parks. She was Oscar-nominated and won both the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture-Comedy/Musical and the NAACP Image for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Motion Picture for her star-making performance as Tina Turner in *What's Love Got To Do With It* (1993). She won an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture for her work as the late-Dr. Betty Shabazz (widow of the slain civil rights pioneer Malcolm X) in Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992). She delivered the only three-dimensional performance in the 1992 ABC miniseries about The Jackson Five and their family, *The Jacksons: An American Dream*, (1992, TV). In 1999, she played Janet Williams--the principal of the school where Roberta Guaspari taught in *Music of The Heart* (1999). She was also in the running to play Dorothy Dandridge, until Halle Berry beat her to the punch with the HBO telefilm, *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge.*

Ross is still The Boss!

"One of the most meaningful things in my life is the privilege to perform my music," says Diana Ross about her legendary career.

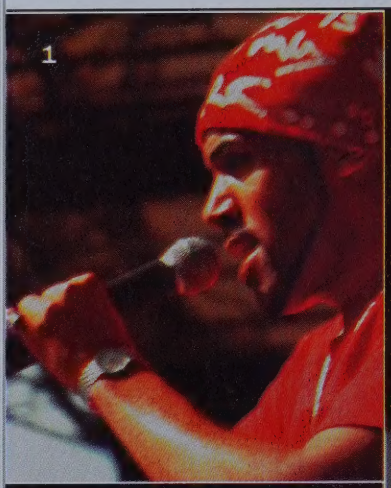
No one was more disappointed then she when the Diana Ross and the Supremes Tour - "A Celebration of Music" was cancelled last year after sagging ticket sales.

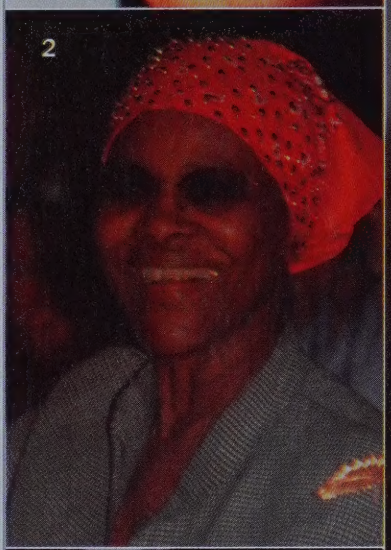
"We wanted to continue to sing our music regardless if there were ten people in the audience or ten thousand. As for myself, I love the music and the fans, and I will find a way to reconnect with them as soon as possible," she said.

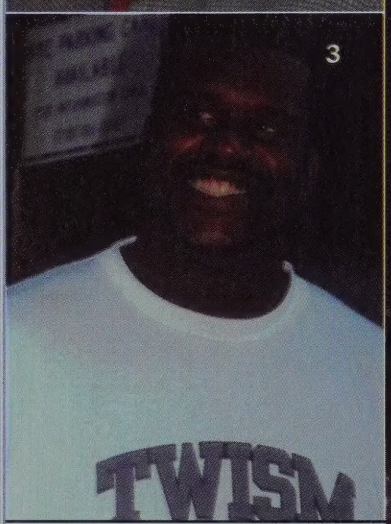
The City of New York called on Diana to lift their spirits singing before a packed Shea Stadium just after the recent bombings at the World Trade Center. God Bless America and God Bless the Boss.

TINA PAUL

Diana Ross at the 20th CFDA Annual American Fashion Awards at Lincoln Center, New York City.

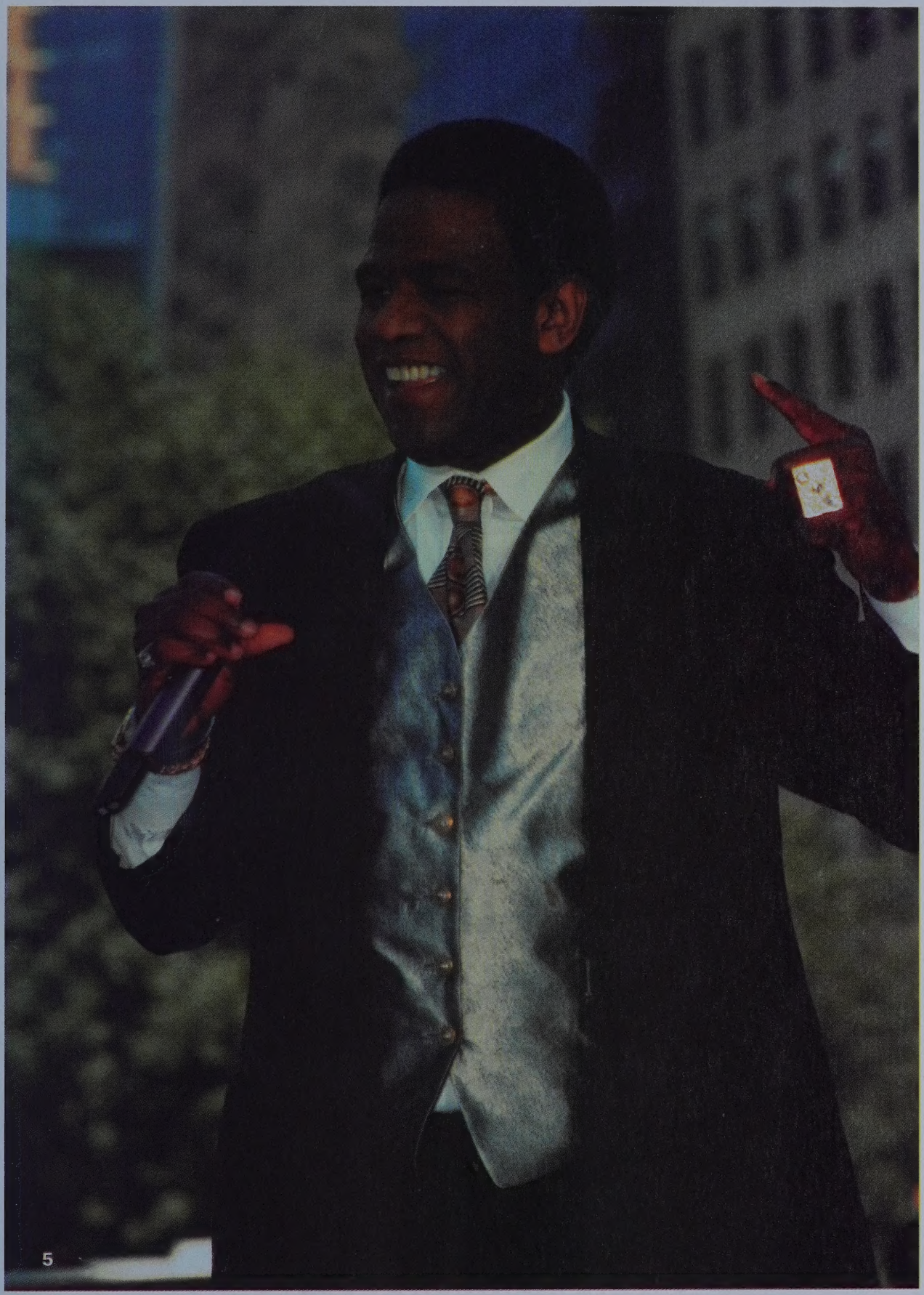






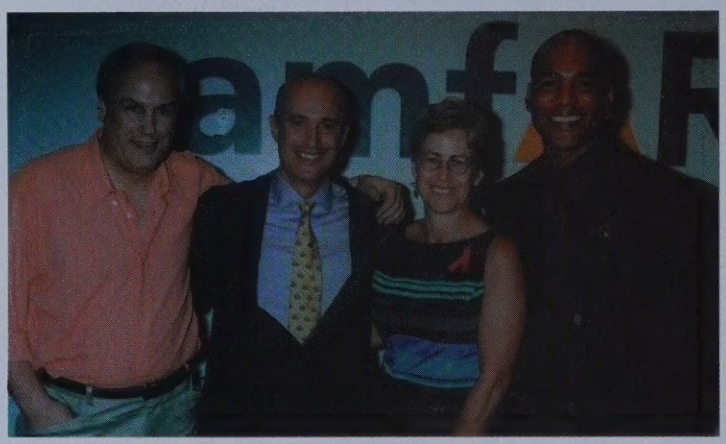
1. Craig David at Central Park Summerstage 2. Cicely Tyson at Sony Lincoln Center Square Theatre
3. Shaquille O'Neal at Planet of the Apes at Ziegfield 4. Joy Bryant at screening of Planet of the Apes
5. Al Green at CBS The Early Show Summer concerts, New York City.

Photography by
Tina Paul



5

amfAR honors with pride



Honorees-*amfAR* Awards of Courage *were presented to Martin Delaney, founding director of Project Inform; Martin Markowitz, M.D., clinical director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center of New York; Melanie Thompson, M.D., founder and principal investigator for the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta; and Phill Wilson, founder of several important HIV/AIDS organizations and Executive Director of African American AIDS Policy & Institute of Los Angels.*

Gossip columnist Liz Smith *joined the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)'s Dr. Mathilde Krim and Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden in honoring leaders in the gay and lesbian communities who have played pioneering roles in the fight against AIDS at amfAR's second annual Honoring with Pride benefit.*

The American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of AIDS research, honored Phil Wilson and others during their second annual dinner in New York this past summer. The event also featured live and silent auctions of luxury items. The live auction included a walk-on role for the hit Showtime series "Queer As Folk". The demand for this item was so high that Showtime generously donated another role, raising $40,000 for both parts. The silent and live auctions raised $83,000 for AIDS research.

Phill Wilson is Founder of the African American AIDS Policy and Training Institute and the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, as well as co-founder of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention. He also helped establish a number of other AIDS service and community-based organizations, including the National Minority AIDS Council. Mr. Wilson has been active in shaping AIDS policy and programs in both the City and County of Los Angeles, and has worked extensively on HIV/AIDS policy, research, prevention, and treatment issues in over a dozen countries. Mr. Wilson received amfAR's "Award of Courage" at the Foundation's Honoring with Pride 2001 benefit in New York and was interviewed prior to the event. Portions of that interview are excerpted below.

When asked if he sees connections between HIV/AIDS in the U.S. and the epidemic in Africa, he responded, "I think there's a huge connection—it is a complicated connection. I think it is absolutely appropriate that we are focusing on AIDS in Africa, and I think it should have happened much earlier. But I am concerned about this kind of either-or form of activism. And I am concerned that the focus that we're placing on AIDS in Africa is to the exclusion of what's happening among poor people and people of color in this country. There are still at least 40,000 Americans becoming infected with HIV each year, and I'm curious what we have to teach the Africans if we can't solve the problem here. If you can't solve the problem with black people who you see everyday, who speak the same language, who you live next to, who you went to school with, who you work with, how are you going to solve the problem for black people you have virtually nothing in common with? I don't think that's going to happen. So I do think that our government and other developed countries have a responsibility on AIDS in Africa, and activists have a responsibility. But I don't think that we can do that work to the exclusion of the work that we need to do here at home.

"TO PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY WHO WANT TO HELP, I HAVE A GREAT WAY OF HELPING: COME HERE AND SPEND MONEY. GO TO A RESTAURANT, SEE A SHOW. THE LIFE OF THE CITY GOES ON."

—MAYOR RUDOLPH W. GIULIANI SEPTEMBER 16, 2001

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books

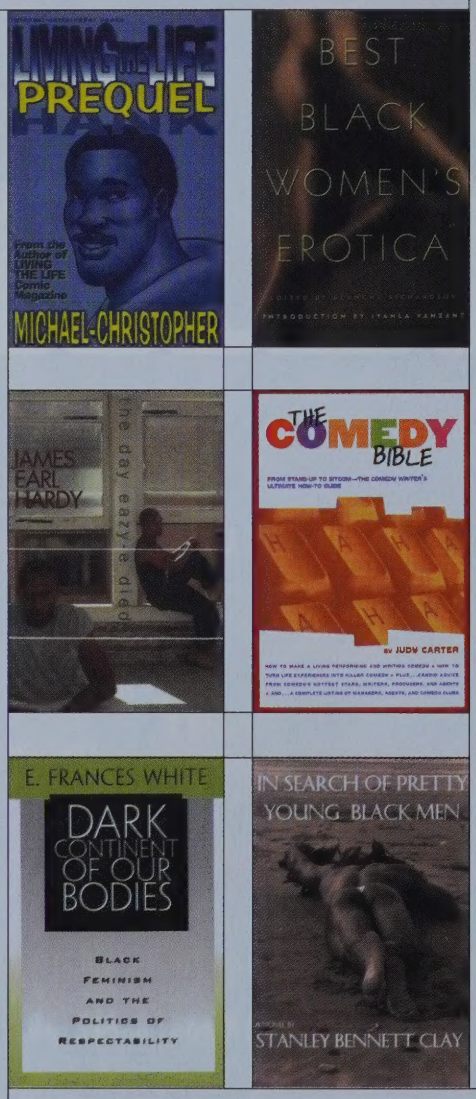
"In the arena of sexuality, we have allowed our history under racism to dictate what we tell about ourselves."

-E.Frances White, In *Dark Continent of Our Bodies Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability*

Living the Life Prequel - Hank a new novel by comic illustrator Michael-Christopher gives an in depth view of the lives behind the comic magazine (Living the Life) characters.

James Earl Hardy's new book *the day eazy-e died* is part of the hip hop *B Boy Blues* series. Hardy looks at issues facing young Black men in light of HIV and AIDS.

In *Dark Continent of Our Bodies Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* E.Frances White, gets up close and personal to Black Feminist writers, science's views on race and gender, African American Nationalism and to the likes of Toni Morrison, James Baldwin and Bell Hooks. In her own words: "In the arena of sexuality, we have allowed our history under racism to dictate what we tell about ourselves."



Best Black Women's Erotica edited by Blanche Richardson, is the first book in a new annual series for all women- bisexual, lesbian and heterosexual.

From stand-up to sit-com, Judy Carter tell readers how to make a living performing and writing comedy. *The Comedy Bible* is the comedy writer's ultimate how-to guide and includes candid advice from writers, producers, and agents.

Author Stanley Bennett Clay, recipient of the NAACP Image Award, has written a new novel, *In Search of Pretty Young Black Men.* This is the tale of Dorian Moore a stud in an upper middle class Southern California community

crossing music's color lines

There was a silence in the room as I faced four girls who looked at me as if I had just confessed the unthinkable. What was my crime you ask? I had just revealed that I was going to see The Dixie Chicks in concert and my friends just didn't 'get it'. You see, my friends and I are black and the thought of me going to see those country crooners was too much of a cross-over to the other side and a sort of betrayal of my race.

Sounds extreme? Well let me give you another example. Not too long ago an acquaintance of mine inquired about my tastes in music by listing off an array of popular urban artists. The mention of KC and JoJo, Lauryn Hill, Sade and Sisquo failed to ignite any positive reaction from me, but when she found out that I was knee-deep in Backstreet Boys hoopla, she looked at me with disgust and shouted, "You're not black!"

Was I hurt by her insult? Not in the slightest bit. You see, I have grown accustomed to that type of ignorance from my black 'brothers' and 'sisters' for a long time now and I look at it as more of a negative comment about their close minds than about any wrongdoing on my part. I don't come from the mindset that says, that because I am black, then I should automatically embrace those artists who share the same skin color as me. Nor do I believe that an artist whose lyrics are reflective of black society are necessarily reflecting my society.

Before you accuse me of being an Oreo-cookie (as my cousins had done in my youth), let me make it clear to you that my record collection boasts an array of artists of many different races, but I just don't see anything wrong with crossing a little Marc Anthony with a whole lot of Barry White.

Shouldn't the music we listen to be about personal taste and not about what others dictate for us? There can be pros and cons to all artists, but it should be up to the individual to gravitate towards those whose vibe, and not race, strikes their fancy.

Cheryl Dunye:

Putting Passion to Work

by Al Cunningham

Filmmaker Cheryl Dunye, center, reviews the script of Stranger Inside *with actresses.*

"I wanted to build another spectacle, concept, moment, enterprise, all the words that don't always go with filmmaking, but definitely go with a passion for life," says filmmaker Cheryl Dunye about the critical acclaim that met her first film, *The Watermelon Woman.* It was that same passion for life that brought her latest film, the HBO-produced "Stranger Inside," to fruition. A few days before the film's premiere in June at the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Venus Magazine, a media sponsor of the San Francisco festival, had a chance to speak with Ms. Dunye by telephone about her work, and why she's so passionate about it.

Stranger Inside is set inside a predominantly African-American women's prison. It features a story about "a daughter trying to find and love her mother." After the success of her first film, Ms. Dunye applied for and received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, and she was invited to a filmmaker residency pro-

gram at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. After utilizing her connections in Minneapolis to obtain clearance to conduct a screenwriting workshop with women inmates at Shakopee Prison, she was able to complete her script. "[The inmates] opened the floodgates at one point, and we just got real. Not about what's wrong, what's right – just who they are today."

She had created "a different sort of a project that ...wasn't easy to pitch...because it wasn't formed in the Hollywood way." She tried to "peddle it around" for a number of years to no avail. Ms. Dunye didn't allow frustration to thwart her efforts. She finally solicited one of her friends – Jim McKay, an independent filmmaker - for

"Luckily, one of the people [McKay] knew…was an [independent producer] who had just gotten a job at HBO … I sent the script to her, she loved it, and that was that."

advice: "...Luckily, one of the people he knew...was an [independent producer] who had just gotten a job at HBO ...I sent the script to her, she loved it, and that was that."

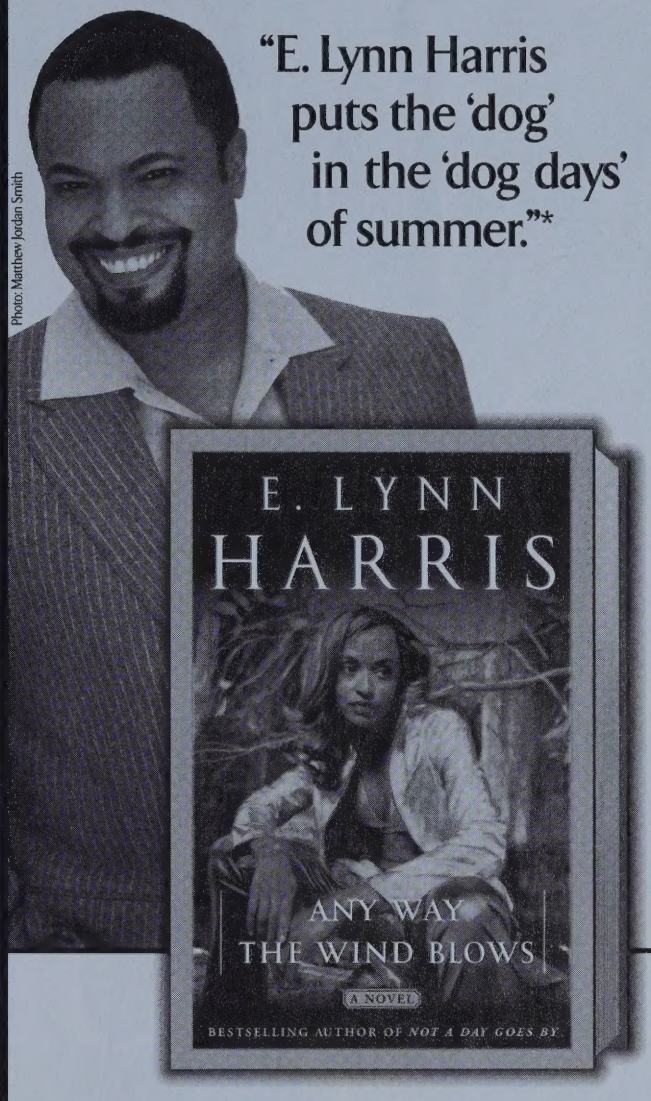
As a student at Temple University in Philadelphia, she learned how to "work it," she says. She was a street vendor, "with...dreadlocks, selling jewelry and what not," to survive. Having to fend for herself in college taught her to put her dreams into action as a struggling filmmaker: "I firmly believe that you have nothing to lose in trying to get what you want out of life - you might even get it!"

Discrimination has also provided her with impetus to create and complete projects. "I'm just trying to reach the next door as quickly as possible. People saying no, hearing the comments [that weren't so positive] about the three parts of me - Black, lesbian, woman...made it a race to get to that door. And not in a prove-you-wrong, prove-me-right way, but more like, 'That's not stopping me. You might be saying that, but I'm not functioning on that level.' That's not the world I'm trying to create."

Ms. Dunye is a hungry artist with the drive to create her own destiny. "I have enough fires under me - enough identities in flux and shouting to be heard that I have a lot of work to do. We have to become responsible for what's left. We're not responsible for some of the injustices in the world, but we do have to be responsible to manage our business, figure it out. You just have to figure out your work, as Audre Lorde put it. Are you doing it? I know people talk, but are you doing it?" Cheryl Dunye is definitely doing it.

FROM *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

E. LYNN HARRIS



ANY WAY THE WIND BLOWS

Ex-football star John Basil Henderson is back, razzle-dazzling both the men and the women. But Basil's life on the "down-low" is threatened when he meets a man who won't take no for an answer—and his ex-fiancée Yancey B.'s hit song hits a little too close to home.

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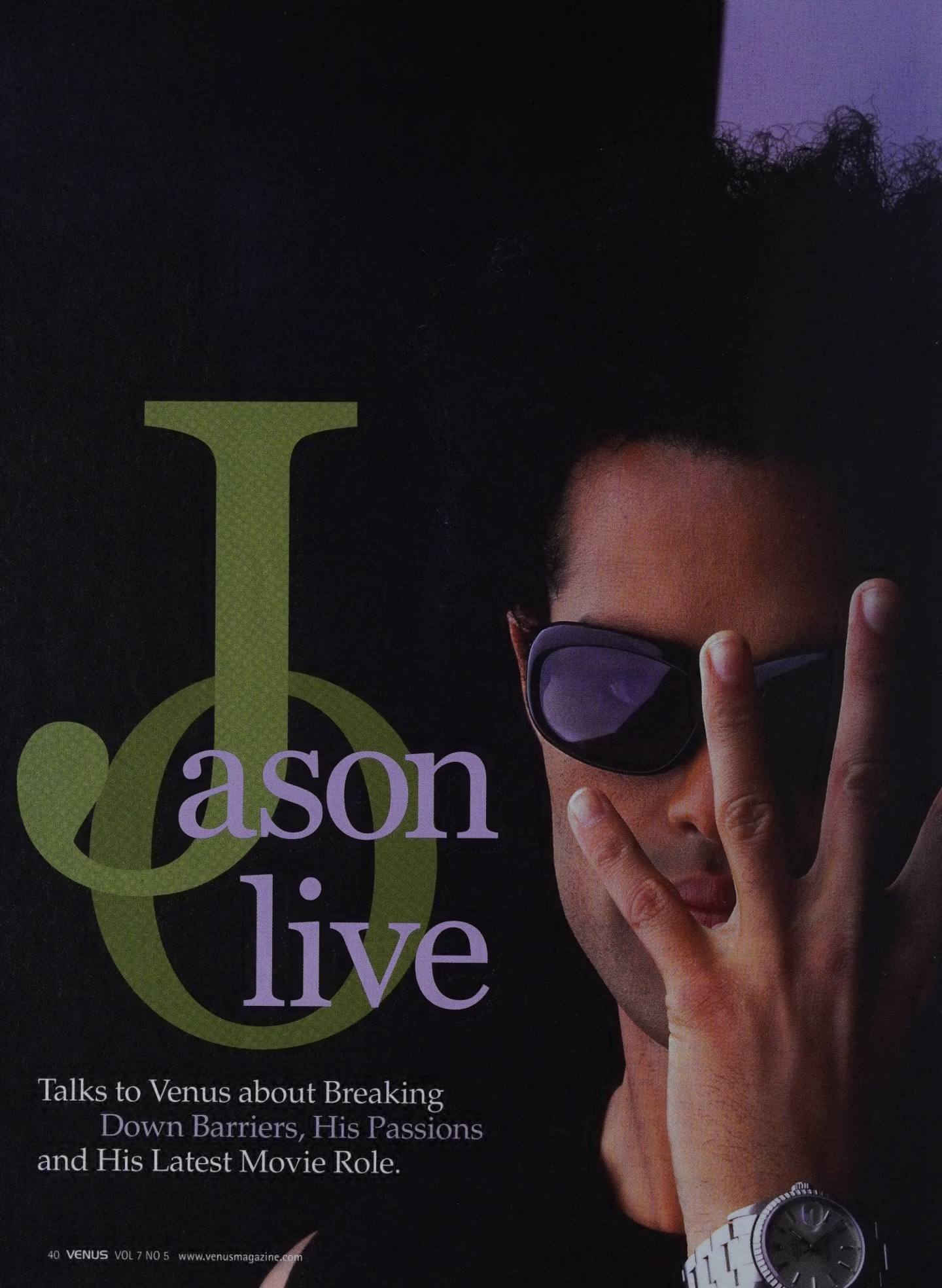


Jason live

Talks to Venus about Breaking Down Barriers, His Passions and His Latest Movie Role.

Olive Juice

words by Claudia Miller
photography by
Bill Heuberger
make-up & styling by
Francois Ilnseher

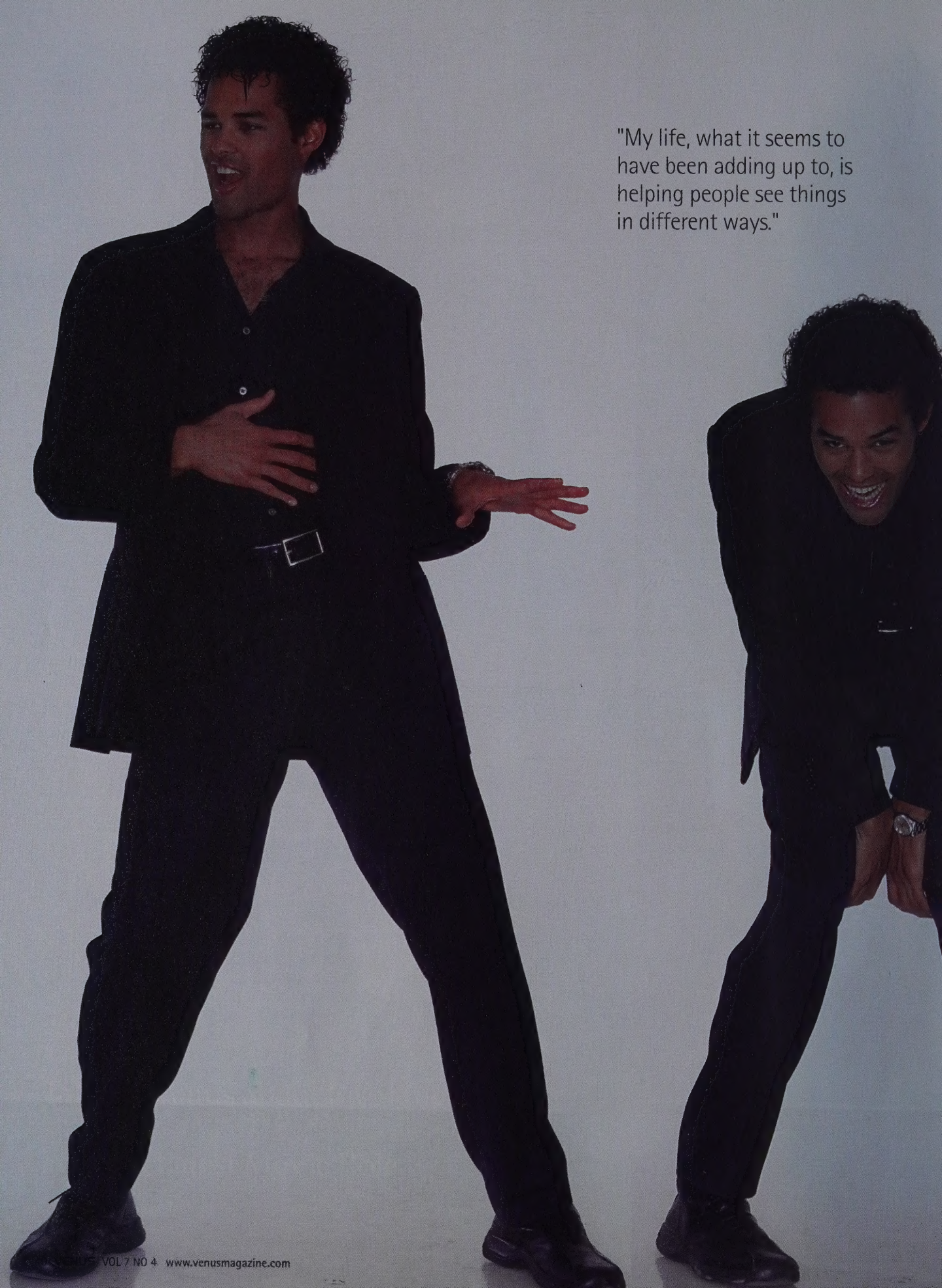
At 29, supermodel and actor Jason Olive is used to breaking down barriers and making people see things in a different light. On a volleyball scholarship to the University of Hawaii in the early 90's, he was one of three African-American male players in Division I college volleyball.

"My life, what it seems to have been adding up to, is helping people see things in different ways," Olive explains in his charming manner by phone interview from his agent's L.A. office.

"Even in my athletic career, I was playing a sport much like tennis or golf that black people don't play."

When he started modeling in 1996, there were only female supermodels. "Whatever hurdles you have to cross are for your betterment," he notes referencing his Hindu beliefs. "And in modeling, there was no such thing in terms of African-Americans--there was no popular male image out there. Of course, now, it's all very different."

At 6' 2" and 195 lbs., the sexy Olive quickly scored top international campaigns with companies such as Armani, Versace, Calvin Klein, Yves Saint Laurent, Banana Republic, Levis and Gap despite his penchant for refusing jobs. He has developed a bit of a rep for not wanting to conform to "a bunch of white people sitting and telling me what a modern black person looks like."



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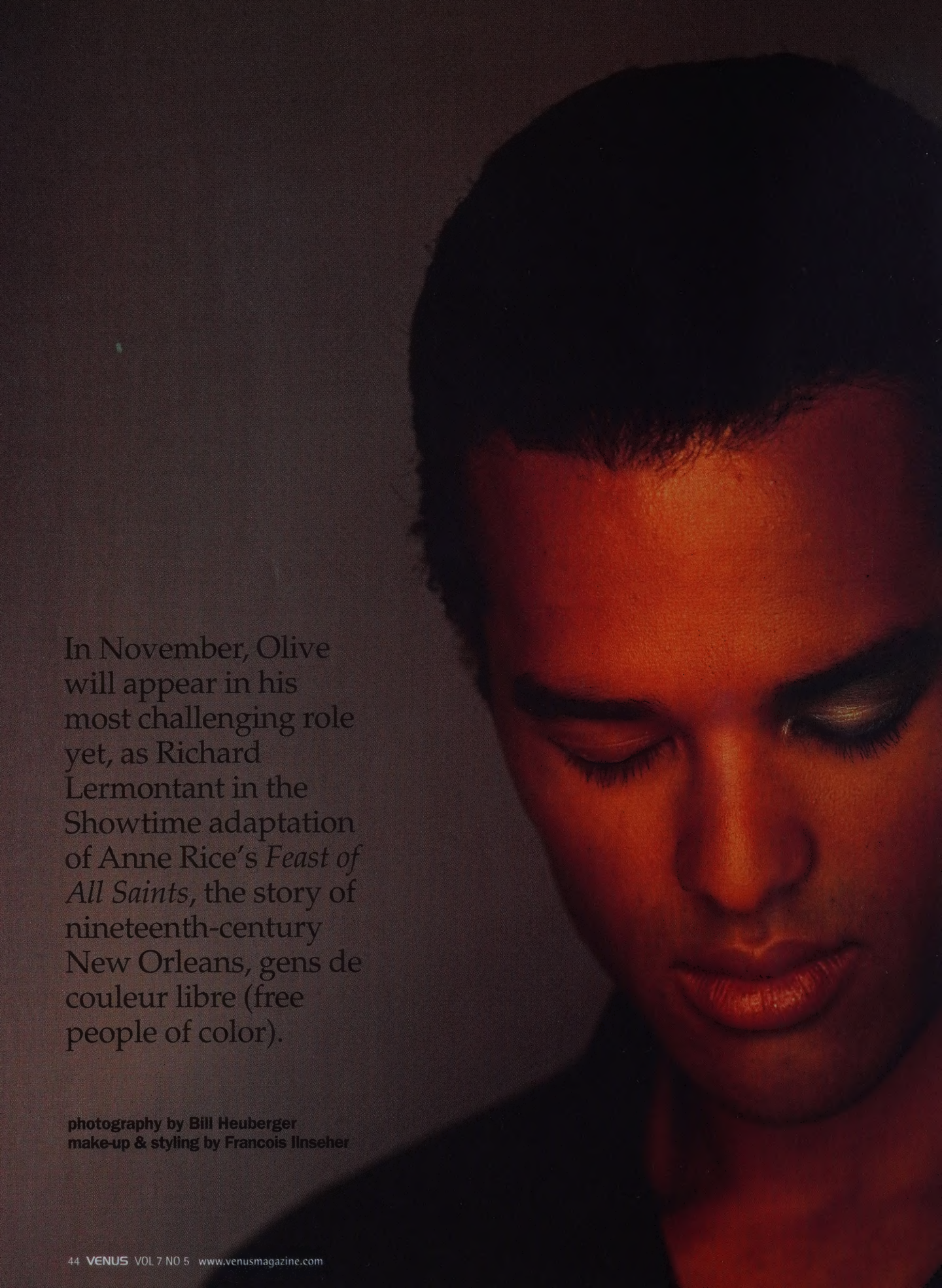


In November, Olive will appear in his most challenging role yet, as Richard Lermontant in the Showtime adaptation of Anne Rice's *Feast of All Saints*, the story of nineteenth-century New Orleans, gens de couleur libre (free people of color).

photography by Bill Heuberger
make-up & styling by Francois Ilnseher

Although he began acting at age 8 (Olive even attended Jane Fonda's famed acting camp in Santa Barbara for several years), well before his modeling career took off, he has only recently landed roles that are garnering him recognition as an actor instead of supermodel. His six-month turn as Frank Lomax in 1999, a determined young private detective from Boston, on the NBC soap *Passions*, earned him legions of daytime fans.

And many GLBT folk joined the Oliver fan club after seeing him on the Film Festival circuit this year as a gay object of affection named Lucas, in *Punks*, to be redistributed by Urban World Films this Winter. "I was debating whether I should do the film: 'Well, it's a gay film, why doesn't a gay actor do the film?' But there must be some stigmatism to this--like some gay actors won't take the role because they're afraid in Hollywood. So I said that's why I should do it, because there are people who feel like they can't be themselves."

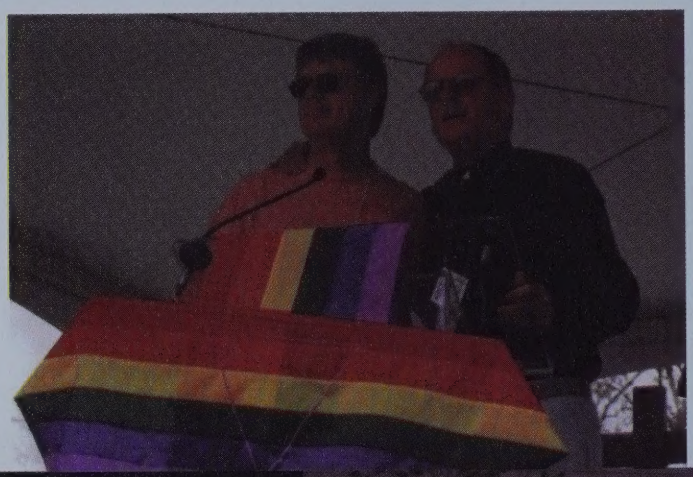
In November, Olive will appear in his most challenging role yet, as Richard Lermontant in the Showtime adaptation of Anne Rice's *Feast of All Saints*, the story of nineteenth-century New Orleans, gens de couleur libre (free people of color). Part of an all-star cast in this $14million, 4-hour mini-series, Olive says, "The cast was so amazing! I had an opportunity to work with Ben Vereen, Pam Grier, Peter Gallagher, Forest Whitaker, Jennifer Beals, Gloria Reuben, Eartha Kitt. These kinds of people!" Beyond his successful acting and modeling careers, Olive has several other talents to keep him occupied. He's a published poet; he's currently shopping two screenplays he co-wrote and has a hemp/cotton clothing line called Natural High. As to what he thinks he'll be doing ten years from now, "If I'm not doing something, at least in my own perception, to help other people, then I'm not really interested."

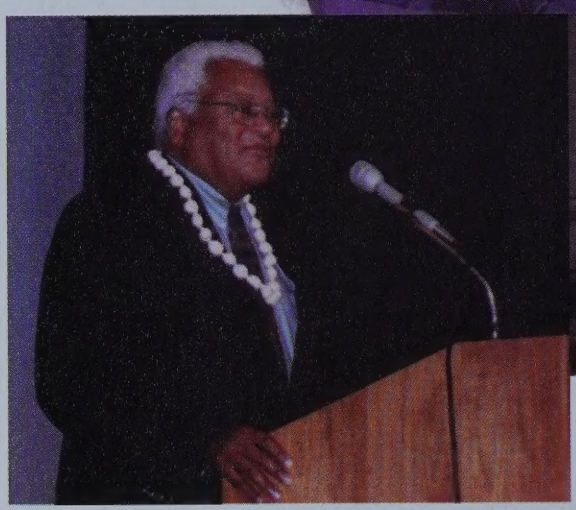
Soul Force

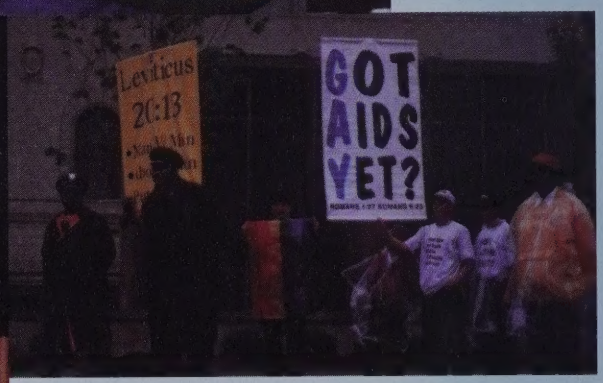
Continued from page 22

Rev. Dr. Mel White and his partner Gary Nixon founded Soulforce (http://www.soulforce.org) as an ecumenical organization of change "seeking justice for God's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children." The group's name is derived from Mohandas Gandhi's teaching of satyagraha, roughly translated as "truth force" or "soul force," and defined as "a plan of action that develop[s] inner lives while working to transform society." The strategy is loving, but relentless, nonviolent resistance through civil disobedience. It is the same strategy used by Martin Luther King, Jr. and other justice-seeking people.

Powell first became aware of Soulforce and White in 1998 through Vanderbilt University classics professor Susan Ford Wiltshire whom he met at the Nashville launch party celebrating journalist David Halberstam's tome, *The Children*. The historical work is about a group of eight students from four black schools in the area–Fisk University, American Baptist College, Tennessee A&I (now part of the University of Tennessee system) and Meharry Medical College–who formed the backbone of an embryonic Civil Rights Movement beginning in the late 50s. Graduates of Meharry, Powell and his ex-wife, Dr. Gloria Johnson-Powell, were two of the eight profiled.







top-Gary Knox and Rev. Mel White of Soulforce at Coalition Rally. left-Rev. Dr. James Lawson speaking at a SoulForce press event, right-Police stand between anti-gay protesters and SoulForce.

Powell recalls his lengthy written conversation with Wiltshire. "During that correspondence, I shared with her that I hadn't found a way of applying the principles of nonviolence to the struggles of gays and lesbians and that it just really amazed me that a group as marginalized as that hadn't discovered and embraced the power of strategic nonviolent resistance." That's when Wiltshire told him about Soulforce and the book that started it all, White's ***Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America***. She sent him a copy and Powell was intrigued.

Around this time, Soulforce members were planning a confrontation with Rev. Jerry Falwell on his home turf of Lynchburg, Virginia for 1999. White knew Falwell from his days as a ghostwriter for prominent members of the Religious Right before acknowledging his homosexuality. He used that entrée to engage the evangelist and his followers about the scathing rhetoric employed when speaking about LGBT communities and make them aware of the damage it caused. It is in this context that White received a call from Powell and the former said, "You've got to be a part of this!" When White met Falwell, Powell was there.

The experience opened Powell's eyes. "As a black person, as an activist and as a student, the one thing that we had was community. Gays and lesbians are, too often, rejected by community, rejected by family and by their churches. I withdrew from organized Christianity a long time ago," he says, "but I'd never thought about how people who retained that strong, Christian faith, when rejected from the body of Christ by their churches and families, deeply suffered." That is why Powell is more

committed to Soulforce than any of his other, secular endeavors.

This writer first met White, Powell and the Rev. James Lawson (the man who taught *The Children* nonviolence) during the quadrennial United Methodist Church General Conference last year in Cleveland. Together, they were formidable. White was the charismatic leader; Powell, the soft-spoken teacher, confidante and hero; and Lawson, a powerful speaker in the black American tradition, the legend and voice of morality. The culmination of Soulforce activities in Cleveland, as in the actions that followed in other cities, was arrest for nonviolent civil disobedience. Leaders arranged details with local authorities in advance, including what laws would be broken, but that did not blunt the impact of the action.

In total, police arrested 200 people requiring two courtrooms, two judges and countless bailiffs and clerks to sort the matter. Broadcast and print journalists from around the world sat in amazement as, one by one, the protesters were arraigned, fined and released. Cleveland Municipal Court judges and other court personnel discreetly peeked into the crowded courtrooms to witness the extraordinary event. In the end, the two presiding judges, one of whom is a staunch Roman Catholic, commended the protesters on their control, determination and faith. Although Cleveland was spectacular, perhaps the most inventive direct action took place last June in New Orleans at the 2001 annual Southern Baptist Convention.

After two days of silent vigil outside the Superdome convention site, over 100 members of Soulforce held a colorful jazz funeral for all of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Baptists who couldn't speak out or who had yet to be born. The ceremony came complete with caskets, pallbearers and a jazz band. The action culminated in the arrest of 34 people who were fined and released. Fortunately, the group raised $8,800 in badly needed funds through pledges from supporters based on the number of hours Fred Phelps and gang from Westboro Baptist Church taunted them.

After two years of protests, slightly less than 1000 arrests and an annual budget of $330,000, Soulforce has become the ACT UP of the LGBT religious movement. They are the "bad boys" (and girls) who believe getting attention and appealing to an inner moral compass are effective ways to teach the faithful about intolerance in their denominations. Such rapid growth has necessitated changes within the organization. There is now a 20-member national advisory board plus an executive committee that has taken over much of the day-to-day preparation for the group's direct actions. This gives White more time to write scripts for two teaching videos and raise money to hire some of the group's volunteers.

He is very thankful for the participation of veteran civil rights leaders. "When King was doing his thing and Gandhi was doing his thing, they didn't have a lot of time to create paradigms of the principles. They were discovering things too fast to really write about them. And when you look into their writings, you don't find soul force carefully enumerated, you see it talked about from the front lines. What I did was go through their writings and try to put those principles into palatable form. [Powell, Lawson and Gandhi's grandson, Arun] have been very helpful in helping me pull together those principles from the experiences in their own lives, and that's been important," he says. In addition, "when we put those teachings into action, like in the direct actions in Cleveland, they have had lots of suggestions about how civil disobedience or spiritual resistance can be shaped and were really in on the planning and are still in on the planning."

> "I withdrew from organized Christianity a long time ago, but I'd never thought about how people who retained that strong, Christian faith, when rejected from the body of Christ by their churches and families, deeply suffered."

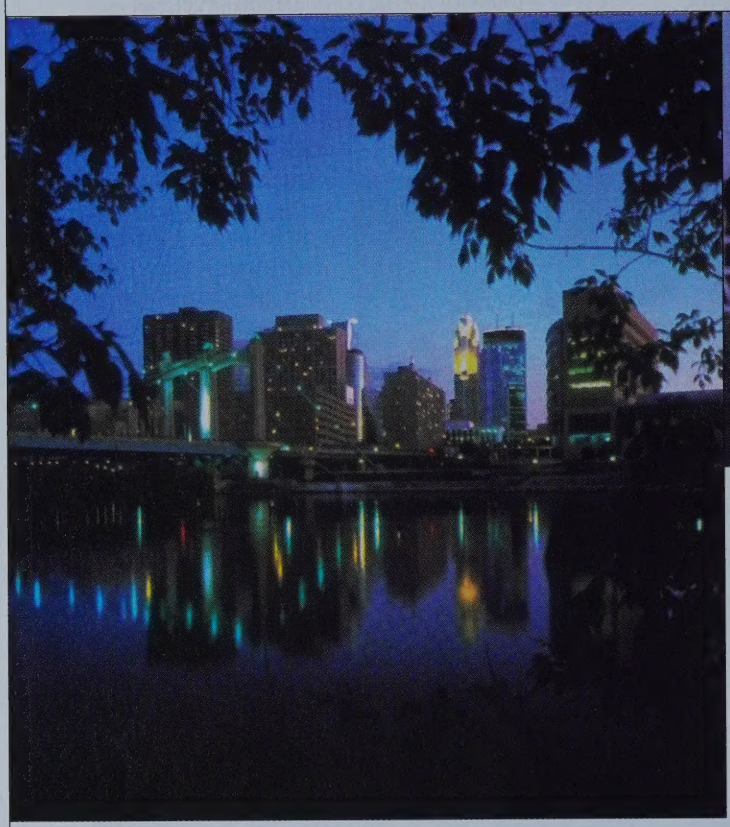
White also says that hearing the old war stories before Soulforce members march has helped inspire the group and having the veterans march in the front ranks gives them the feeling that they are on the right path. He credits their presence for inspiring more media interest.

There are probably some blacks who believe Powell is being used by a largely white organization. When the question is raised he laughs, but does admit to being an icon when pressed. "I use it to draw the parallel between the plight of the LGBT community today and the plight of African-Americans a half century ago and what our struggle entailed and what it took," he explains. "I try to point out the lessons learned that are important for us to apply in our [LGBT religious] movement."

If Powell is being used, it is in the best manner. He is the retired general who comes down from paradise into the belly of the beast and answers his community's call in a time of need. Thanks to him, another generation will learn that wars do not need guns and bullets. They only need the courage of conviction. *—Drew Alise Timmens*

minneapolis

by LeRoy Whitfield



About $225 will buy you a gay-friendly "partners package", that includes a room with a bi-level suite complete with a living room-to-bedroom spiral staircase.

_The Hyatt Whitney

The results are in. Minneapolis is cool, but not the "Coolest Place on Earth," as hyped by its tourism bureau. But you can't knock a city for trying. And try, Minneapolis does. The city is, in fact, going to great lengths to distance itself from its industrial past--converting former flour mills into half-million dollar condos, modern office space and lavish hotels--to become a metropolis with enough panache to rival Chicago, the Midwest's unofficial capitol.

accommodations

A shining example of the urban renewal that drives Minneapolis' vision is the Hyatt Whitney, a mill-turned-hotel that boasts guests such as Elton John and Bruce Springsteen. About $225 will buy you a gay-friendly "partners package" that includes a room with a bi-level suite complete with a living room-to-bedroom spiral staircase. Or, if you are really looking to be queen for a day, a penthouse level is available--an entire floor that will accommodate 70 of your closest friends for a party and (for the after-party) includes three king-sized beds, two living room parlors with fireplaces, five baths, each with their own jacuzzi and a floor-wide balcony for $2,500 per night. Try landing a deal like that in the Windy City.

Not to be beat, the Courtyard By The Marriott at The Depot features a defunct train station-to-hotel conversion with a 15,000 square foot indoor water park with a glass atrium, oversized whirlpool and 185 foot water slide. And if you prefer your thrills on the rocks instead, a vast indoor ice skating rink is also part of the hotel, just a stone's throw away. Rooms here start at $129 per night.

dining out & entertainment

Hungry? The city's main course meal ticket is Eat Street, featuring 17 blocks of sporadically placed mediocre restaurants. Remember that you been fairly warned when you stumble into the likes of Snoodles, Johnson Meat Company or Slice of New York Pizza and are disappointed. But off the beaten path, gems can be found.

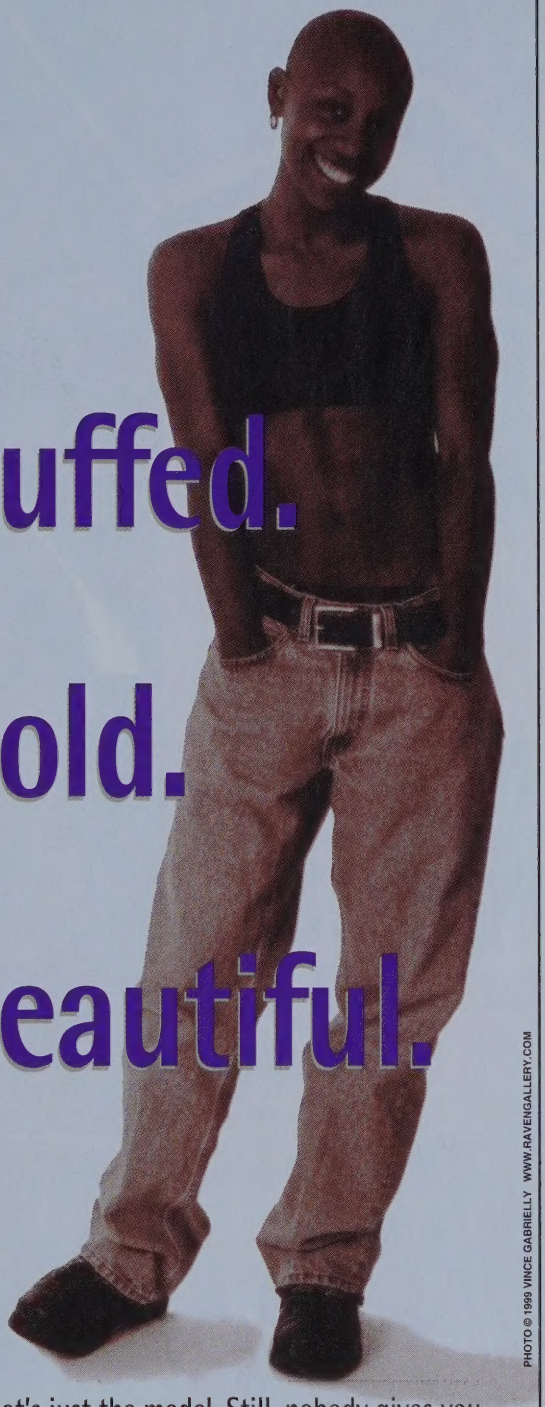
On 14th and Hennepin Avenue, the newly rechristened Dish (formerly Table Of Contents) will serve up a reasonably priced chef's special of almond encrusted seared tuna with baby vegetables, capers and sautéed microgreens. A cab ride away Oddfellows, which is adjoined with Boom!, one of Minneapolis' eight gay bars, is sure to delight with adequate ambiance for after-dinner drinks, dessert or coffee. Another option is Chino Latino in the eclectic Uptown neighborhood, which boasts a mean brunch including honey-drizzled cinnamon-dashed Jamaican biscuits. (Finger-lickin' good!)

If it's black culture, counterculture (or even a black date) that you seek, the pickings are slim, yet satisfactory if discovered. Just so you know, Minneapolis has one of the lowest African American populations of any U.S. city--just 20 percent of the city's population, compared to 70 percent of whites. Nigerians and Ethiopians help compensate for Minneapolis' color dearth and gay African immigrants can be spotted grooving at predominately white bars on weekends.

Not a bar-hopper? Penumbra (www.penumbratheater.org), in nearby St. Paul dubs itself "theater for the soul" and is one of few thriving African American companies in the Midwest featuring well-produced matinee, evening and late shows. Other brands of culture can be discovered at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which now showcases an African gallery and the hip Walker Art Center.

If all else fails, you can resort to the common denominator of any American urban center – shopping. Shopping is big in Minneapolis. The Mall of America features over 500 stores and restaurants and houses an indoor amusement park. The more subdued Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis has heated sidewalks so that perusing is always a breeze, even in icy winter months.

So, do the sum of this city's parts equal the "Coolest Place on Earth?" Not quite. But it's certainly a worthy domestic escape.



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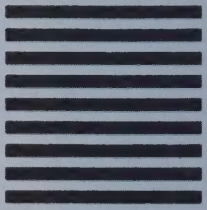

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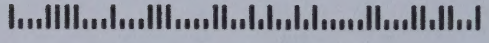

the best of times, the worst of times

The best of times in the stock market was the period that lasted almost a decade, from the early 90's to 1999. The worst of times is now. If you're in the market, you're hurting. You are probably not day trading in your online brokerage account anymore. Even your 401k account is showing signs of vulnerability. Experts had counted on the consumer to pull our economy through this tough time, but that's not happening.

Although the 2nd quarter GDP showed marginal growth [0.4%], it will most likely be revised to negative growth. In theory, two successive quarters of negative GDP growth is an official recession. But if you ask the average worker like you and me, we can tell the experts it feels like we are already in a recession. For our people it looks even gloomier as the Black female jobless rate rose 0.9% to 6.9%, versus 4.9% unemployment overall, according to The Labor Department.

What to do?

If you believe that this slowdown could last a bit longer than first anticipated, then you want to continue to shift your money into treasury bonds and certain corporate bonds. Right now you can get 7% on corporate bonds and over 11% on the best of the high yield market. Treasuries are returning around 5%. If buying the actual bonds seems intimidating, then try mutual funds that buy these bonds. Remember your portfolio should never consist of 100% of anything - stocks or bonds.

Its also important to manage your expectations going forward. The benchmark S&P 500 index lost close to 10% last year and we look like we will have another loss this year. That is really tough for investors that have been buying on dips. We had grown accustom to 20% returns recently. If the historical return on the stock market is 12%, then we can expect below-average returns for years to come, somewhere around 8-11%.

Even so, the stock market is still the only game in town. If you factor in 3% inflation, banks paying you 3% or less on your balance means you're losing purchasing power. Bonds will give you a 2% real return and stocks will return you around 7% or 8%, after inflation. So, you have to get comfortable with risk, you have to mix up your portfolio and give yourself lots of time. Before the last 2 years, there were not many people alive who could remember the last time investors felt so much pain. Now, we can all say we remember. *Dale Bryant is the portfolio manager for The Bryant Group. He can be contacted at db@bryantgroup.com www.bryantgroup.com*

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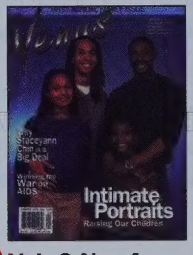

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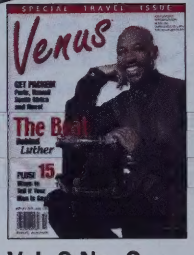

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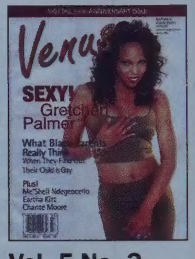

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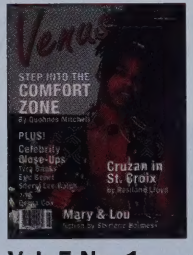

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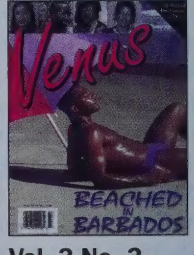

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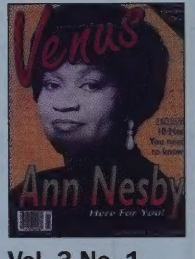

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porno to the people

Educational video features African-American women of all body types, ages, and levels of sexual experience discussing a range of topics from communication to masturbation to sensation play.

Please Don't Stop, the latest video to be released by SexpositiveProductions, "could very well be a groundbreaking film," says the movie's writer/star/director, Oriana Bolden. And she's correct. Not only is it the first lesbian erotic video to have an all-women-of color cast and crew, but also it is the first to have an educational backdrop. The movie, the second offering from the newly minted Good Vibrations video-producing arm, features African-American women of all body types, ages, and levels of sexual experience discussing a range of topics from communication to masturbation to sensation play. Each topic is then illuminated in a subsequent erotic scene, taking feminist porn to the next level.

Please Don't Stop gives many women access to sexual information they would not find watching other erotic media. The video, whose cast the director is "most proud of," boasts no "gay-for-pay" actresses. All the models in the film are lesbians, and the movie, like all future Sexpositive videos places a special emphasis on "mutual respect, enthusiastic participation and women's pleasure."

Good Vibrations, known for putting sexuality in a positive light with its well-lighted retail stores (in Berkeley and San Francisco) and wildly popular website (goodvibes.com), created Sexpositive Productions to "portray erotic images under-represented in the adult industry and popular media, while delivering the authentic heat that audiences have been clamoring for." For a number of years, Good Vibrations has also sent its own sex educators into the field to conduct workshops about sex and sexuality. Oriana Bolden, an independent filmmaker, was one of those sex educators. A veteran producer of video documentaries used to effect change, Ms. Bolden had begun pre-production for a video documentary of her sex education workshops when Sarah Kennedy, producer of the first Sexpositive Productions video, called and pitched the idea for *Please Don't Stop*. "It's surprising that no one else has done this yet," says Ms. Bolden. Of course she's surprised. An HIV/AIDS counselor since she was 16 years old, Ms. Bolden has been blazing trails her whole life and she is only 23! With *Please Don't Stop*, Good Vibrations fulfills their dual mission of bringing quality products and reliable sex information to women everywhere.

love undone

Is the Expectation That Your Man Should be as OUT as You Too Demanding?

by Orville Lloyd Douglas

One Monday evening my best friend and I were talking about why neither of us have men in our lives. I use the word gay because many of the other black men I meet do not identify as homosexuals. Why is it the black men I meet around my age aren't out?

Many of the guys I have met are straight by day and gay at night. Some of the men I have spoken to tell me they have wives or girlfriends and children. Of course, no one knows about their double lives. It is simply frustrating to hear so many of the black men I meet tell me "I am not gay but I go both ways" or "I am bisexual." No one seems to want to say the phrase, "I am gay." I feel like I am an anomaly. I also understand the real fear and anxiety some black men feel. I was in their shoes myself a few years back before I came out to my family.

"I saw him pick up a pair of leather pants and I said, jokingly, "That looks kind of gay." He flipped out and screamed at me, "Don't use that fucking word around me ever again!"

I had a date in the summer with a guy around my age. He was definitely going places. I was intensely attracted to him. Like me, he was Jamaican; he was 24 years old, cute and intelligent, and he was also interested in politics. We went to a shopping mall, and we were in a trendy store. I saw him pick up a pair of leather pants and I said, jokingly, "That looks kind of gay."

He flipped out and screamed at me, "Don't use that fucking word around me ever again!" I was mad, but I held my tongue. We left the store immediately. As we walked through the crowded mall, he pulled me aside and admonished me. "Orville, what is your fucking problem? I know a lot of other black people here... Don't pull that gay shit on me, all right? I have a reputation to keep. Unlike you, I have to deal with the consequences of the way I live my life."

I was so upset. On the drive to my house we didn't speak to one another, and we didn't speak again until two months later, when I had to tell him, "I can't go out with you. We never do anything. You always hide. I can't deal with this." I had intense feelings for him but I couldn't handle all of the hiding. He usually only met me at night. He preferred that I call his cell phone instead of his house line.

He did teach me something, though. I have to be realistic. I am extremely selfish. I know there are openly gay black men in Toronto, but where are they? Are these guys into other black men?? The few other openly gay black men I have met are only interested in white men. I have to admit that I am attracted to the "down-low" black male. He is so masculine and so alluring and so strong. I like those qualities in a man.

So I have come to a decision. I can't expect the black man I want to be out. That expectation is too demanding. I have not been fair. I know how hard it is to be a young black gay male. It is not my right to ask someone to think about coming out of the closet. Many black men I have met don't relate to the terms "gay" or "bisexual." I am cool with this. I understand now that I have to stop being so demanding. I am the one who has been wrong all along. I don't care if some guy I'm seeing is out to his family or coworkers or friends. All that I ask is, whether or not he uses labels, that he accepts himself.

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Ruth Joyce Waters

April 15, 1930 - July 14, 2001

As the product of an interracial liaison between a "feisty" white woman and a bi-racial man at the beginning of the Depression, Ruth J. Waters never considered that one could choose not to fight injustice whenever and wherever encountered.

Educated in the Nurse Training Program at the University of Oklahoma, Ruth was the first female to host a radio show in Oklahoma City. Her activism and community involvement continued in California as she challenged local School Boards, served as den mother, Girl Scout leader, a Big Sister, and was an active member and fundraiser for the Pasadena NAACP during the Civil Rights Era. Having begun her career as a nurse, Ruth worked with the Los Angeles County Probation Program and served as head of the Pasadena branch of the Employment Development Department's Summer Youth Program. A devoted grandmother, Ms. Waters was both feared and loved by a generation of local youth.

A true Renaissance woman, she was a self-taught auto mechanic, seamstress, dog breeder, computer and stock market novice, and an official rescue person for the Kennel Club. Ruth knew that a meaningful life demanded that you be true to yourself, and be willing to grow and change. In 1986, Ruth co-founded the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum and served as its co-chair for six years. Prior to that, she served on the Board of Connexxus for two years. In 1995, she became the first recipient of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's LACE (Lesbian and Bisexual Women Active in Community Empowerment) Award for Outstanding Contributions as a Grassroots Activist.

As a founding member of Investors Unlimited, Ruth served the club as vice-president and became its president in February of this year. Continuing her lifelong commitment to service, Ruth became a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), where she worked for the well being of abused and neglected children in the Dependency courts of the County of Los Angeles. At the Pasadena Church of Religious Science, she was a member of the Toastmasters Club, volunteered in the Computer Lab and attended services with her granddaughter Robin.

A true fighter, Ruth was a survivor of both breast and cervical cancer. Having lost her last battle with cancer, Ruth unselfishly donated her body to UCLA for medical research and organ transplant. Shortly after her Sunset, her corneas were transplanted giving two individuals the gift of sight.

She is deeply loved and will be dearly missed by all whose lives she touched. One very close to Ruth recently remarked that "she was one hell of a woman, and a magnificent mother."

Ron Singleton

1. l-r, Valerie Wagner-Director of Education at LA Gay and Lesbian Center, Ruth Waters, Phil Wilson-Executive Director African American AIDS Policy and Institute, Steve Oxendine-HIV Manager DuPont Pharmaceutical 2. Minister Russell Thornhill-Unity Fellowship Church/LA, Ruth Waters, Linda Villarosa-Author, 3. Mandy Carter, Rev. LaPaula Turner, Ruth Waters.

We extend our deepest sympathy and our prayers to the families and friends of those whose lives were taken on September 11, 2001.

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